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JANE AUSTEN'S LETTERS

VOL. II.

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GODMERSHAM HOUSE

LETTERS

OF

JANE AUSTEN

EDITED,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND CRITICAL REMARKS

BY

EDWARD, LORD BRABOURNE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

LONDON

RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET

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1884

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LETTERS

OF

JANE AUSTEN.

1808, 1809

These letters were written at a time when the first great misfortune fell upon the Godmersham family, in the loss of the wife and mother so tenderly loved by all. In the last week of September Elizabeth Austen was confined with her youngest child, and on the 8th of October, after eating a hearty dinner, she was suddenly seized with sickness, and expired before the serious nature of her attack had been fully realized. The first two letters of the series, written just before this event, are in Jane's usual and cheerful spirit, and require no particular comment. The third (No. 45) was Jane's first communication to her sister after the melancholy news from Godmersham, and this and the two

subsequent letters are principally upon the same subject. The forty-eighth letter alludes to the approaching marriage of Edward Bridges[1] with Harriet Foote, the sister of his brother Sir Brook's late wife. There are also allusions in this letter to some matters connected with her own mother's (the Leigh) family, which are of no public interest; nor is there anything in the forty-ninth to which I need call attention. In the fiftieth Jane alludes (as elsewhere in subsequent letters) to Lady Sondes' second marriage. This lady was Mary Elizabeth, only daughter of Richard Milles, Esq., of Elmham, Norfolk, who married, in 1785, Lewis Thomas, the second Lord Sondes, who died in 1806, and she subsequently married General Sir Henry Tucker Montresor, K.C.B., of Denne Hill. She died in 1818, leaving several children by her first, but none by her second husband, who married twice again, first Annetta, daughter of the Rev. Edward Cage, Rector of Eastling, by whom he left a family, and lastly Miss Fairman, who survived him many years, but had no children.

I do not know what 'deed' Sir Brook Bridges

[1] Edward Bridges had the living of Lenham, his visits from which to Godmersham are referred to in subsequent letters. He afterwards went to Wingham, where he died, in 1825, leaving a large family.

was supposed to be 'making up his mind to' during the *tête-à-tête* to which allusion is made in the letter, unless it was the deed of taking for his second wife Dorothy, eldest daughter of Sir Henry Hawley, which he actually accomplished in December of the next year. Probably, however, Jane was jokingly alluding to the probability of his proposing to Cassandra herself. This is the last letter of the year, for the next bears the date of January 1809. It alludes to the illness of Mrs. E. Leigh, who would seem by the context to have been the mother of Mrs. Cooke, and, as George Cooke was 'the Reverend George Leigh Cooke,' we may gather, without searching more closely the family pedigree, that these were Jane's relations on the mother's side, of whom she saw a good deal from time to time, after taking 'Bookham' in her way to and from Steventon.[1]

I have no record of the visit to Godmersham, to the prospect of which allusion is made in this letter, and it is to be regretted that there are no letters after January 1809, for more than two

[1] I find that the Rev. Mr. Cooke, Rector of Bookham, was one of Jane's god-parents—the others were Mrs. Jane Austen of Sevenoaks and Mrs. Musgrave, born Jane Huggins, and wife of Dr. James Musgrave, whose mother was Catherine Perrot.

years, though, of course, many must have been written. These January letters do not contain any other allusions which appear to require explanation, or regarding which explanation would be of any general interest.

XLIII.

Castle Square: Saturday (October 1).

My dear Cassandra,

Your letter this morning was quite unexpected, and it is well that it brings such good news to counterbalance the disappointment to me of losing my first sentence, which I had arranged full of proper hopes about your journey, intending to commit them to paper to-day, and not looking for certainty till to-morrow.

We are extremely glad to hear of the birth of the child, and trust everything will proceed as well as it begins. His mamma has our best wishes, and he our second best for health and comfort—though I suppose, unless he has our best too, we do nothing for *her*. We are glad it was all over before your arrival, and I am most happy to find who the godmother is to be. My mother was some time guessing the names.

Henry's present to you gives me great pleasure, and I shall watch the weather for him at this time with redoubled interest.

We have had four brace of birds lately, in equal lots, from Shalden and Neatham.

Our party at Mrs. Duer's produced the novelties of two old Mrs. Pollens and Mrs. Heywood, with whom my mother made a quadrille table; and of Mrs. Maitland and Caroline, and Mr. Booth without his sisters, at commerce. I have got a husband for each of the Miss Maitlands; Colonel Powlett and his brother have taken Argyle's inner house, and the consequence is so natural that I have no ingenuity in planning it. If the brother should luckily be a little sillier than the Colonel, what a treasure for Eliza!

Mr. Lyford called on Tuesday to say that he was disappointed of his son and daughter's coming, and must go home himself the following morning; and as I was determined that he should not lose every pleasure, I consulted him on my complaint. He recommended cotton, moistened with oil of sweet almonds, and it has done me good. I hope, therefore, to have nothing more to do with Eliza's receipt than to feel obliged to her for giving it, as I very sincerely do.

Mrs. Tilson's remembrance gratifies me, and I will use her patterns if I can.

I have just finished a handkerchief for Mrs. James Austen, which I expect her husband to give me an opportunity of sending to her ere long. Some fine day in October will certainly bring him to us in the garden, between three and four o'clock. *She* hears that Miss Bigg is to be married in a fortnight. I wish it may be so.

About an hour and a-half after your toils on Wednesday ended, ours began. At seven o'clock Mrs. Harrison, her two daughters and two visitors, with Mr. Debary and his eldest sister, walked in.

A second pool of commerce, and all the longer by the addition of the two girls, who during the first had one corner of the table and spillikens to themselves, was the ruin of us; it completed the prosperity of Mr. Debary, however, for he won them both.

Mr. Harrison came in late, and sat by the fire, for which I envied him, as we had our usual luck of having a very cold evening. It rained when our company came, but was dry again before they left us.

The Miss Ballards are said to be remarkably well-informed; their manners are unaffected and

pleasing, but they do not talk quite freely enough to be agreeable, nor can I discover any right they had by taste or feeling to go their late tour.

Miss Austen and her nephew are returned, but Mr. Choles is still absent. 'Still absent,' say you, 'I did not know that he was gone anywhere;' neither did I know that Lady Bridges was at Godmersham at all, till I was told of her being *still* there, which I take, therefore, to be the most approved method of announcing arrivals and departures.

Mr. Choles is gone to drive a cow to Brentford, and his place is supplied to us by a man who lives in the same sort of way by odd jobs, and among other capabilities has that of working in a garden, which my mother will not forget if we ever have another garden here. In general, however, she thinks much more of Alton, and really expects to move there.

Mrs. Lyell's 130 guineas rent have made a great impression. To the purchase of furniture, whether here or there, she is quite reconciled, and talks of the *trouble* as the only evil. I depended upon Henry's liking the Alton plan, and expect to hear of something perfectly unexceptionable there, through him.

Our Yarmouth division seem to have got nice lodgings; and, with fish almost for nothing and plenty of engagements and plenty of each other, must be very happy.

My mother has undertaken to cure six hams for Frank; at first it was a distress, but now it is a pleasure. She desires me to say that she does not doubt your making out the star pattern very well, as you have the breakfast-room rug to look at.

We have got the second volume of 'Espriella's Letters,' and I read it aloud by candlelight. The man describes well, but is horribly anti-English. He deserves to be the foreigner he assumes.

Mr. Debary went away yesterday, and I, being gone with some partridges to St. Maries, lost his parting visit.

I have heard to-day from Miss Sharpe, and find that she returns with Miss B. to Hinckley, and will continue there at least till about Christmas, when she thinks they may both travel southward. Miss B., however, is probably to make only a temporary absence from Mr. Chessyre, and I should not wonder if Miss Sharpe were to continue with her; unless anything more eligible offer she certainly will. She describes Miss B. as very anxious that she should do so.

Sunday.—I had not expected to hear from you again so soon, and am much obliged to you for writing as you did; but now, as you must have a great deal of the business upon your hands, do not trouble yourself with me for the present; I shall consider silence as good news, and not expect another letter from you till Friday or Saturday.

You must have had a great deal more rain than has fallen here; cold enough it has been, but not wet, except for a few hours on Wednesday evening, and I could have found nothing more plastic than dust to stick in; now, indeed, we are likely to have a wet day, and, though Sunday, my mother begins it without any ailment.

Your plants were taken in one very cold, blustering day, and placed in the dining-room, and there was a frost the very same night. If we have warm weather again they are to be put out of doors; if not, my mother will have them conveyed to their winter quarters. I gather some currants every now and then, when I want either fruit or employment.

Pray tell my little goddaughter that I am delighted to hear of her saying her lesson so well.

You have used me ill: you have been writing to Martha without telling me of it, and a letter

which I sent her on Wednesday to give her information of you must have been good for nothing. I do not know how to think that something will not still happen to prevent her returning by the 10th; and if it does, I shall not much regard it on my own account, for I am now got into such a way of being alone that I do not wish even for her.

The Marquis has put off being cured for another year; after waiting some weeks in vain for the return of the vessel he had agreed for, he is gone into Cornwall to order a vessel built for himself by a famous man in that country, in which he means to go abroad a twelvemonth hence.

Everybody who comes to Southampton finds it either their duty or pleasure to call upon us; yesterday we were visited by the eldest Miss Cotterel, just arrived from Waltham. Adieu! With love to all,

Yours affectionately, J. A.

We had two pheasants last night from Neatham To-morrow evening is to be given to the Maitlands. We are just asked to meet Mrs. Heywood and Mrs. Duer.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XLIV.

Castle Square: Friday (October 7).

My dear Cassandra,

Your letter on Tuesday gave us great pleasure, and we congratulate you all upon Elizabeth's hitherto happy recovery; to-morrow, or Sunday, I hope to hear of its advancing in the same style. We are also very glad to know that you are so well yourself, and pray you to continue so.

I was rather surprised on Monday by the arrival of a letter for you, from your Winchester correspondent, who seemed perfectly unsuspicious of your being likely to be at Godmersham. I took complete possession of the letter by reading, paying for, and answering it; and he will have the biscuits to-day—a very proper day for the purpose, though I did not think of it at the time.

I wish my brother joy of completing his thirtieth year, and hope the day will be remembered better than it was six years ago.

The masons are now repairing the chimney, which they found in such a state as to make it wonderful that it should have stood so long, and next to impossible that another violent wind should not blow it down. We may, therefore, thank *you*

perhaps for saving us from being thumped with old bricks. You are also to be thanked by Eliza's desire for your present to her of dyed satin, which is made into a bonnet, and I fancy surprises her by its good appearance.

My mother is preparing mourning for Mrs. E. K.; she has picked her old silk pelisse to pieces, and means to have it dyed black for a gown—a very interesting scheme, though just now a little injured by finding that it must be placed in Mr. Wren's hands, for Mr. Chambers is gone. As for Mr. Floor, he is at present rather low in our estimation. How is your blue gown? Mine is all to pieces. I think there must have been something wrong in the dye, for in places it divided with a touch. There was four shillings thrown away, to be added to my subjects of never-failing regret.

We found ourselves tricked into a thorough party at Mrs. Maitland's, a quadrille and a commerce table, and music in the other room. There were two pools at commerce, but I would not play more than one, for the stake was three shillings, and I cannot afford to lose that twice in an evening. The Miss M.'s were as civil and as silly as usual.

You know of course that Martha comes to-day,

yesterday brought us notice of it, and the spruce beer is brewed in consequence.

On Wednesday I had a letter from Yarmouth, to desire me to send Mary's flannels and furs, &c.; and, as there was a packing case at hand, I could do it without any trouble.

On Tuesday evening Southampton was in a good deal of alarm for about an hour: a fire broke out soon after nine at Webb's, the pastrycook, and burnt for some time with great fury. I cannot learn exactly how it originated; at the time it was said to be their bakehouse, but now I hear it was in the back of their dwelling-house, and that one room was consumed.

The flames were considerable: they seemed about as near to us as those at Lyme, and to reach higher. One could not but feel uncomfortable, and I began to think of what I should do if it came to the worst; happily, however, the night was perfectly still, the engines were immediately in use, and before ten the fire was nearly extinguished, though it was twelve before everything was considered safe, and a guard was kept the whole night. Our friends the Duers were alarmed, but not out of their good sense or benevolence.

I am afraid the Webbes have lost a great deal,

more perhaps from ignorance or plunder than the fire; they had a large stock of valuable china, and, in order to save it, it was taken from the house and thrown down anywhere.

The adjoining house, a toyshop, was almost equally injured, and Hibbs, whose house comes next, was so scared from his senses that he was giving away all his goods, valuable laces, &c., to anybody who would take them.

The crowd in the High Street, I understand, was immense; Mrs. Harrison, who was drinking tea with a lady at Millar's, could not leave at twelve o'clock. Such are the prominent features of our fire. Thank God they were nŏt worse!

Saturday.—Thank you for your letter, which found me at the breakfast table with my two companions.

I am greatly pleased with your account of Fanny; I found her in the summer just what you describe, almost another sister; and could not have supposed that a niece would ever have been so much to me. She is quite after one's own heart; give her my best love, and tell her that I always think of her with pleasure.

I am much obliged to you for inquiring about my ear, and am happy to say that Mr. Lyford's

prescription has entirely cured me. I feel it a great blessing to hear again.

Your gown shall be unpicked, but I do not remember its being settled so before.

Martha was here by half-past six, attended by Lyddy; they had some rain at last, but a very good journey on the whole; and if looks and words may be trusted Martha is very happy to be returned. We receive her with Castle Square weather; it has blown a gale from the N.W. ever since she came, and we feel ourselves in luck that the chimney was mended yesterday.

She brings several good things for the larder, which is now very rich: we had a pheasant and hare the other day from the Mr. Grays of Alton. Is this to entice us to Alton, or to keep us away? Henry had probably some share in the two last baskets from that neighbourhood, but we have not seen so much of his hand-writing, even as a direction to either.

Martha was an hour and a-half in Winchester, walking about with the three boys and at the pastrycook's. She thought Edward grown, and speaks with the same admiration as before of his manners; she saw in George a little likeness to his uncle Henry.

I am glad you are to see Harriot ; give my love to her. I wish you may be able to accept Lady Bridges' invitation, though *I* could not her son Edward's ; she is a nice woman and honours me by her remembrance.

Do you recollect whether the Manydown family sent about their wedding cake? Mrs. Dundas has set her heart upon having a piece from her friend Catherine, and Martha, who knows what importance she attaches to this sort of thing, is anxious for the sake of both that there should not be a disappointment.

Our weather, I fancy, has been just like yours ; we have had *some* very delightful days, our 5th and 6th were what the 5th and 6th of October should always be, but we have always wanted a fire *within* doors, at least except for just the middle of the day.

Martha does not find the key which you left in my charge for her suit the keyhole, and wants to know whether you think you can have mistaken it. It should open the interior of her high drawers, but she is in no hurry about it.

Sunday.—It is cold enough now for us to prefer dining upstairs to dining below without a fire, and being only three we manage it very well, and to-day with two more we shall do just

as well, I dare say. Miss Foote and Miss Wethered are coming.

My mother is much pleased with Elizabeth's admiration of the rug; and pray tell Elizabeth that the new mourning gown is to be made double *only* in the body and sleeves.

Martha thanks you for your message, and desires you may be told, with her best love, that your wishes are answered, and that she is full of peace and comfort here. I do not think, however, that here she will remain a great while; she does not herself expect that Mrs. Dundas will be able to do with her long. She *wishes* to stay with us till Christmas, if possible. Lyddy goes home to-morrow: she seems well, but does not mean to go to service at present.

The Wallops are returned. Mr. John Harrison has paid his visit of duty and is gone. We have got a new physician, a Dr. Percival, the son of a famous Dr. Percival, of Manchester, who wrote moral tales for Edward to give to me.

When you write again to Catherine, thank her on my part for her very kind and welcome mark of friendship; I shall value such a brooch very much.

Good-bye, my dearest Cassandra.

Yours very affectionately, J. A.

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Have you written to Mrs. E. Leigh? Martha will be glad to find Anne in work at present, and I am as glad to have her so found. We must turn our black pelisses into new, for velvet is to be very much worn this winter.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XLV.

Castle Square (October 13).

My dearest Cassandra,

I have received your letter, and with most melancholy anxiety was it expected, for the sad news reached us last night, but without any particulars. It came in a short letter to Martha from her sister, begun at Steventon and finished in Winchester.

We have felt—we do feel—for you all, as you will not need to be told: for you, for Fanny, for Henry, for Lady Bridges, and for dearest Edward, whose loss and whose sufferings seem to make those of every other person nothing. God be praised that you can say what you do of him: that he has a religious mind to bear him up, and a disposition that will gradually lead him to comfort.

My dear, dear Fanny, I am so thankful that she has you with her! You will be everything to her; you will give her all the consolation that human aid can give. May the Almighty sustain you all, and keep you, my dearest Cassandra, well; but for the present I dare say you are equal to everything.

You will know that the poor boys are at Steventon. Perhaps it is best for them, as they will have more means of exercise and amusement there than they could have with us, but I own myself disappointed by the arrangement. I should have loved to have them with me at such a time. I shall write to Edward by this post.

We shall, of course, hear from you again very soon, and as often as you can write. We will write as you desire, and I shall add Bookham. Hamstall, I suppose, you write to yourselves, as you do not mention it.

What a comfort that Mrs. Deedes is saved from present misery and alarm! But it will fall heavy upon poor Harriot; and as for Lady B., but that her fortitude does seem truly great, I should fear the effect of such a blow, and so unlooked for. I long to hear more of you all. Of Henry's anguish

I think with grief and solicitude; but he will exert himself to be of use and comfort.

With what true sympathy our feelings are shared by Martha you need not be told; she is the friend and sister under every circumstance.

We need not enter into a panegyric on the departed, but it is sweet to think of her great worth, of her solid principles, of her true devotion, her excellence in every relation of life. It is also consolatory to reflect on the shortness of the sufferings which led her from this world to a better.

Farewell for the present, my dearest sister. Tell Edward that we feel for him and pray for him.

Yours affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

I will write to Catherine.

Perhaps you can give me some directions about mourning.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XLVI.

Castle Square: Saturday night (October 15).

My dear Cassandra,

Your accounts make us as comfortable as we can expect to be at such a time. Edward's loss is terrible, and must be felt as such, and these are too early days indeed to think of moderation in grief, either in him or his afflicted daughter, but soon we may hope that our dear Fanny's sense of duty to that beloved father will rouse her to exertion. For his sake, and as the most acceptable proof of love to the spirit of her departed mother, she will try to be tranquil and resigned. Does she feel you to be a comfort to her, or is she too much overpowered for anything but solitude?

Your account of Lizzy is very interesting. Poor child! One must hope the impression *will* be strong, and yet one's heart aches for a dejected mind of eight years old.

I suppose you see the corpse? How does it appear? We are anxious to be assured that Edward will not attend the funeral, but when it comes to the point I think he must feel it impossible.

Your parcel shall set off on Monday, and I hope

the shoes will fit; Martha and I both tried them on. I shall send you such of your mourning as I think most likely to be useful, reserving for myself your stockings and half the velvet, in which selfish arrangement I know I am doing what you wish.

I am to be in bombazeen and crape, according to what we are told is universal *here*, and which agrees with Martha's previous observation. My mourning, however, will not impoverish me, for by having my velvet pelisse fresh lined and made up, I am sure I shall have no occasion *this winter* for anything new of that sort. I take my cloak for the lining, and shall send yours on the chance of its doing something of the same for you, though I believe your pelisse is in better repair than mine. *One* Miss Baker makes my gown and the other my bonnet, which is to be silk covered with crape.

I have written to Edward Cooper, and hope he will not send one of his letters of cruel comfort to my poor brother; and yesterday I wrote to Alethea Bigg, in reply to a letter from her. She tells us in confidence that Catherine is to be married on Tuesday se'nnight. Mr. Hill is expected at Manydown in the course of the ensuing week.

We are desired by Mrs. Harrison and Miss Austen to say everything proper for them to your-

self and Edward on this sad occasion, especially that nothing but a wish of not giving additional trouble where so much is inevitable prevents their writing themselves to express their concern. They seem truly to feel concern.

I am glad you can say what you do of Mrs. Knight and of Goodnestone in general; it is a great relief to me to know that the shock did not make any of them ill. But what a task was yours to announce it! *Now* I hope you are not overpowered with letter-writing, as Henry and John can ease you of many of your correspondents.

Was Mr. Scudamore in the house at the time, was any application attempted, and is the seizure at all accounted for?

Sunday.—As Edward's letter to his son is not come here, we know that you must have been informed as early as Friday of the boys being at Steventon, which I am glad of.

Upon your letter to Dr. Goddard's being forwarded to them, Mary wrote to ask whether my mother wished to have her grandsons sent to her. We decided on their remaining where they were, which I hope my brother will approve of. I am sure he will do us the justice of believing that in

such a decision we sacrificed inclination to what we thought best.

I shall write by the coach to-morrow to Mrs. J. A., and to Edward, about their mourning, though this day's post will probably bring directions to them on that subject from yourselves. I shall certainly make use of the opportunity of addressing our nephew on the most serious of all concerns, as I naturally did in my letter to him before. The poor boys are, perhaps, more comfortable at Steventon than they could be here, but you will understand *my feelings* with respect to it.

To-morrow will be a dreadful day for you all. Mr. Whitfield's will be a severe duty.[1] Glad shall I be to hear that it is over.

That you are for ever in our thoughts you will not doubt. I see your mournful party in my mind's eye under every varying circumstance of the day; and in the evening especially figure to myself its sad gloom: the efforts to talk, the frequent summons to melancholy orders and cares, and poor Edward, restless in misery, going from one room to another, and perhaps not seldom upstairs, to see all that remains of his Elizabeth.

[1] Mr. Whitfield was the Rector of Godmersham at this time, having come there in 1778.

Dearest Fanny must now look upon herself as his prime source of comfort, his dearest friend; as the being who is gradually to supply to him, to the extent that is possible, what he has lost. This consideration will elevate and cheer her.

Adieu. You cannot write too often, as I said before. We are heartily rejoiced that the poor baby gives you no particular anxiety. Kiss dear Lizzy for us. Tell Fanny that I shall write in a day or two to Miss Sharpe.

My mother is not ill.

Yours most truly, J. Austen.

Tell Henry that a hamper of apples is gone to him from Kintbury, and that Mr. Fowle intended writing on Friday (supposing him in London) to beg that the charts, &c., may be consigned to the care of the Palmers. Mrs. Fowle has also written to Miss Palmer to beg she will send for them.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XLVII.

Castle Square: Monday (October 24).

My dear Cassandra,

Edward and George came to us soon after seven on Saturday, very well, but very cold, having by

choice travelled on the outside, and with no great coat but what Mr. Wise, the coachman, good-naturedly spared them of his, as they sat by his side. They were so much chilled when they arrived, that I was afraid they must have taken cold; but it does not seem at all the case; I never saw them looking better.

They behave extremely well in every respect, showing quite as much feeling as one wishes to see, and on every occasion speaking of their father with the liveliest affection. His letter was read over by each of them yesterday, and with many tears; George sobbed aloud, Edward's tears do not flow so easily; but as far as I can judge they are both very properly impressed by what has happened. Miss Lloyd, who is a more impartial judge than I can be, is exceedingly pleased with them.

George is almost a new acquaintance to me, and I find him in a different way as *engaging as Edward.*

We do not want amusement: bilbocatch, at which George is indefatigable, spillikins, paper ships, riddles, conundrums, and cards, with watching the flow and ebb of the river, and now and then a stroll out, keep us well employed; and we mean to avail ourselves of our kind papa's

consideration, by not returning to Winchester till quite the evening of Wednesday.

Mrs. J. A. had not time to get them more than one suit of clothes; their others are making here, and though I do not believe Southampton is famous for tailoring, I hope it will prove itself better than Basingstoke. Edward has an old black coat, which will save *his* having a second new one; but I find that black pantaloons are considered by them as necessary, and of course one would not have them made uncomfortable by the want of what is usual on such occasions.

Fanny's letter was received with great pleasure yesterday, and her brother sends his thanks and will answer it soon. We all saw what she wrote, and were very much pleased with it.

To-morrow I hope to hear from you, and to-morrow we must think of poor Catherine. To-day Lady Bridges is the heroine of our thoughts, and glad shall we be when we can fancy the meeting over. There will then be nothing so very bad for Edward to undergo.

The 'St. Albans,' I find, sailed on the very day of my letters reaching Yarmouth, so that we must not expect an answer at present; we scarcely feel, however, to be in suspense, or only enough to keep

our plans to ourselves. We have been obliged to explain them to our young visitors, in consequence of Fanny's letter, but we have not yet mentioned them to Steventon. We are all quite familiarised to the idea ourselves; my mother only wants Mrs. Seward to go out at Midsummer.

What sort of a kitchen garden is there? Mrs. J. A. expresses her fear of our settling in Kent, and, till this proposal was made, we began to look forward to it here; my mother was actually talking of a house at Wye. It will be best, however, as it is.

Anne has just given her mistress warning; she is going to be married; I wish she would stay her year.

On the subject of matrimony, I must notice a wedding in the Salisbury paper, which has amused me very much, Dr. Phillot to Lady Frances St. Lawrence. *She* wanted to have a husband I suppose, once in her life, and *he* a Lady Frances.

I hope your sorrowing party were at church yesterday, and have no longer *that* to dread. Martha was kept at home by a *cold, but I went with my two nephews, and I saw Edward was much affected by the sermon, which, indeed, I could have supposed purposely addressed* to the afflicted, if the

text had not naturally come in the course of Dr. Mant's observations on the Litany: 'All that are in danger, necessity, or tribulation,' was the subject of it. The weather did not allow us afterwards to get farther than the quay, where George was very happy as long as we could stay, flying about from one side to the other, and skipping on board a collier immediately.

In the evening we had the Psalms and Lessons, and a sermon at home, to which they were very attentive; but you will not expect to hear that they did not return to conundrums the moment it *was over*. Their aunt has written pleasantly of them, which was more than I hoped.

While I write now, George is most industriously making and naming paper ships, at which he afterwards shoots with horse-chestnuts, brought from Steventon on purpose; and Edward equally intent over the 'Lake of Killarney,' twisting himself about in one of our great chairs.

Tuesday.—Your close-written letter makes me quite ashamed of my wide lines; you have sent me a great deal of matter, most of it very welcome. As to your lengthened stay, it is no more than I expected, and what must be, but you cannot suppose I like it.

All that you say of Edward is truly comfortable; I began to fear that when the bustle of the first week was over, his spirits might for a time be more depressed; and perhaps one must still expect something of the kind. If *you* escape a bilious attack, I shall wonder almost as much as rejoice. I am glad you mentioned where Catherine goes to-day; it is a good plan, but sensible people may generally be trusted to form such.

The day began cheerfully, but it is not likely to continue what it should, for them or for us. *We had a little water party* yesterday; I and my two nephews went from the Itchen Ferry up to Northam, where we landed, looked into the 74, and walked home, and it was so much enjoyed that I had intended to take them to Netley to-day; the tide is just right for our going immediately after moonshine, but I am afraid there will be rain; if we cannot get so far, however, we may perhaps go round from the ferry to the quay.

I had not proposed doing more than cross the Itchen yesterday, but it proved so pleasant, and so much to the satisfaction of all, that when we reached the middle of the stream we agreed to be rowed up the river; both the boys rowed great part of the way, and their questions and remarks,

as well as their enjoyment, were very amusing; George's enquiries were endless, and his eagerness in everything reminds me often *of his Uncle Henry*.

Our evening was equally agreeable in its way: I introduced *speculation*, and it was so much approved that we hardly knew how to leave off.

Your idea of an early dinner to-morrow is exactly what we propose, for, after writing the first part of this letter, it came into my head that at this time of year we have not summer evenings. We shall watch the light to-day, that we may not give them a dark drive to-morrow.

They send their best love to papa and everybody, with George's thanks for the letter brought by this post. Martha begs my brother may be assured of her interest in everything relating to him and his family, and of her sincerely partaking our pleasure in the receipt of every good account from Godmersham.

Of Chawton I think I can have nothing more to say, but that everything you say about it in the letter now before me will, I am sure, as soon as I am able to read it to her, make my mother consider the plan with more and more pleasure. We had formed the same views on H. Digweed's farm.

A very kind and feeling letter is arrived to-day

from Kintbury. Mrs. Fowle's sympathy and solicitude on such an occasion you will be able to do justice to, and to express it as she wishes to my brother. Concerning *you*, she says: 'Cassandra will, I know, excuse my writing to her; it is not to save myself but *her* that I omit so doing. Give my best, my kindest love to her, and tell her I feel for her as I know she would for me on the same occasion, and that I most sincerely hope her health will not suffer.'

We have just had two hampers of apples from Kintbury, and the floor of our little garret is almost covered. Love to all.

Yours very affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XLVIII.

Castle Square: Sunday (November 21).

Your letter, my dear Cassandra, obliges me to write immediately, that you may have the earliest notice of Frank's intending, if possible, to go to Godmersham exactly at the time now fixed for your visit to Goodnestone.

He resolved, almost directly on the receipt of

your former letter, to try for an extension of his leave of absence, that he might be able to go down to you for two days, but charged me not to give you any notice of it, on account of the uncertainty of success. Now, however, I must give it, and now perhaps he may be giving it himself; for I am just in the hateful predicament of being obliged to write what I know will somehow or other be of no use.

He meant to ask for five days more, and if they were granted, to go down by Thursday night's mail, and spend Friday and Saturday with you; and he considered his chance of succeeding by no means bad. I hope it will take place as he planned, and that your arrangements with Goodnestone may admit of suitable alteration.

Your news of Edward Bridges was *quite* news, for I have had no letter from Wrotham. I wish him happy with all my heart, and hope his choice may turn out according to his own expectations, and beyond those of his family; and I dare say it will. Marriage is a great improver, and in a similar situation Harriet may be as amiable as Eleanor. As to money, that will come, you may be sure, because they cannot do without it. When

you see him again, pray give him our congratulations and best wishes. This match will certainly set John and Lucy going.

There are six bedchambers at Chawton; Henry wrote to my mother the other day, and luckily mentioned the number, which is just what we wanted to be assured of. He speaks also of garrets for store places, one of which she immediately planned fitting up for Edward's man servant; and now perhaps it must be for our own; for she is already quite reconciled to our keeping one. The difficulty of doing without one had been thought of before. His name shall be Robert, if you please.

Before I can tell you of it, you will have heard that Miss Sawbridge is married. It took place, I believe, on Thursday. Mrs. Fowle has for some time been in the secret, but the neighbourhood in general were quite unsuspicious. Mr. Maxwell *was* tutor to the young Gregorys—consequently, they must be one of the happiest couples in the world, and either of them worthy of envy, for *she* must be excessively in love, and he mounts from nothing to a comfortable home. Martha has heard him very highly spoken of. They continue for the present at Speen Hill.

I have a Southampton match to return for your Kentish one, Captain G. Heathcote and Miss A. Lyell. I have it from Alethea, and like it, because I had made it before.

Yes, the Stoneleigh business is concluded, but it was not till yesterday that my mother was regularly informed of it, though the news had reached us on Monday evening by way of Steventon. My aunt says as little as may be on the subject by way of information, and nothing at all by way of satisfaction. She reflects on Mr. T. Leigh's dilatoriness, and looks about with great diligence and success for inconvenience and evil, among which she ingeniously places the danger of her new housemaids catching cold on the outside of the coach, when she goes down to Bath, for a carriage makes her sick.

John Binns has been offered their place, but declines it; as she supposes, because he will not wear a livery. Whatever be the cause, I like the effect.

In spite of all my mother's long and intimate knowledge of the writer, she was not up to the expectation of such a letter as this; the discontentedness of it shocked and surprised her—but *I* see nothing in it out of nature, though a sad nature.

She does not forget to wish for Chambers, you

may be sure. No particulars are given, not a word of arrears mentioned, though in her letter to James they were in a *general way* spoken of. The amount of them is a matter of conjecture, and to my mother a most interesting one; she cannot fix any time for their beginning with any satisfaction to herself but Mrs. Leigh's death, and Henry's two thousand pounds neither agrees with that period nor any other. I did not like to own our previous information of what was intended last July, and have therefore only said that if we could see Henry we might hear many particulars, as I had understood that some confidential conversation had passed between him and Mr. T. L. at Stoneleigh.

We have been as quiet as usual since Frank and Mary left us; Mr. Criswick called on Martha that very morning on his way home again from Portsmouth, and we have had no visitor since.

We called on the Miss Lyells one day, and heard a good account of Mr. Heathcote's canvass, the success of which, of course, exceeds his expectations. Alethea in her letter hopes for *my interest*, which I conclude means Edward's, and I take this opportunity, therefore, of requesting that he will bring in Mr. Heathcote. Mr. Lane told us yesterday that Mr. H. had behaved very handsomely,

and waited on Mr. Thistlethwaite, to say that if *he* (Mr. T.) would stand, *he* (Mr. H.) would not oppose him; but Mr. T. declined it, acknowledging himself still smarting under the payment of late electioneering costs.

The Mrs. Hulberts, we learn from Kintbury, come to Steventon this week, and bring Mary Jane Fowle with them on her way to Mrs. Nunes; she returns at Christmas with her brother.

Our brother we may perhaps see in the course of a few days, and we mean to take the opportunity of his help to go one night to the play. Martha ought to see the inside of the theatre once while she lives in Southampton, and I think she will hardly wish to take a second view.

The furniture of Bellevue is to be sold tomorrow, and we shall take it in our usual walk, if the weather be favourable.

How could you have a wet day on Thursday? With us it was a prince of days, the most delightful we have had for weeks; soft, bright, with a brisk wind from the south-west; everybody was out and talking of spring, and Martha and I did not know how to turn back. On Friday evening we had some very blowing weather—from 6 to 9, I think we never heard it worse, even here. And

one night we had so much rain that it forced its way again into the store closet, and though the evil was comparatively slight and the mischief nothing, I had some employment the next day in drying parcels, &c. I have now moved still more out of the way.

Martha sends her best love, and thanks you for admitting her to the knowledge of the pros and cons about Harriet Foote; she has an interest in all such matters. I am also to say that she wants to see you. Mary Jane missed her papa and mama a good deal at first, but now does very well without them. I am glad to hear of little John's being better; and hope your accounts of Mrs. Knight will also improve. Adieu! remember me affectionately to everybody, and believe me,

Ever yours, J. A.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XLIX.

Castle Square: Friday (December 9).

Many thanks, my dear Cassandra, to you and Mr. Deedes for your joint and agreeable composition, which took me by surprise this morning.

He has certainly great merit as a writer; he does ample justice to his subject, and, without being diffuse, is clear and correct; and though I do not mean to compare his epistolary powers with yours, or to give him the same portion of my gratitude, he certainly has a very pleasing way of winding up a whole, and speeding truth into the world.

'But all this,' as my dear Mrs. Piozzi says, 'is flight and fancy, and nonsense, for my master has his great casks to mind and I have my little children.' It is *you*, however, in this instance, that have the little children, and *I* that have the great cask, for we are brewing spruce beer again; but my meaning really is, that I am extremely foolish in writing all this unnecessary stuff when I have so many matters to write about that my paper will hardly hold it all. Little matters they are, to be sure, but highly important.

In the first place, Miss Curling is actually at Portsmouth, which I was always in hopes would not happen. I wish her no worse, however, than a long and happy abode there. *Here* she would probably be dull, and I am sure she would be troublesome.

The bracelets are in my possession, and everything I could wish them to be. They came with

Martha's pelisse, which likewise gives great satisfaction.

Soon after I had closed my last letter to you we were visited by Mrs. Dickens and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Bertie, the wife of a lately-made Admiral. Mrs. F. A.,[1] I believe, was their first object, but they put up with us very kindly, and Mrs. D., finding in Miss Lloyd a friend of Mrs. Dundas, had another motive for the acquaintance. She seems a really agreeable woman—that is, her manners are gentle, and she knows a great many of our connections in West Kent. Mrs. Bertie lives in the Polygon, and was out when we returned her visit, which are *her* two virtues.

A larger circle of acquaintance, and an increase of amusement, is quite in character with our approaching removal. Yes, I mean to go to as many balls as possible, that I may have a good bargain. Everybody is very much concerned at our going away, and everybody is acquainted with Chawton, and speaks of it as a remarkably pretty village, and everybody knows the house we describe, but nobody fixes on the right.

I am very much obliged to Mrs. Knight for such a proof of the interest she takes in me, and

[1] Frank Austen.

she may depend upon it that I *will* marry Mr. Papillon, whatever may be his reluctance or my own. I owe her much more than such a trifling sacrifice.

Our ball was rather more amusing than I expected. Martha liked it very much, and I did not gape till the last quarter of an hour. It was past nine before we were sent for, and not twelve when we returned. The room was tolerably full, and there were, perhaps, thirty couple of dancers. The melancholy part was, to see so many dozen young women standing by without partners, and each of them with two ugly naked shoulders.

It was the same room in which we danced fifteen years ago. I thought it all over, and in spite of the shame of being so much older, felt with thankfulness that I was quite as happy now as then. We paid an additional shilling for our tea, which we took as we chose in an adjoining and very comfortable room.

There were only four dances, and it went to my heart that the Miss Lances (one of them, too, named Emma) should have partners only for two. You will not expect to hear that *I* was asked to dance, but I was—by the gentleman whom we met *that Sunday* with Captain D'Auvergne. We have always

kept up a bowing acquaintance since, and, being pleased with his black eyes, I spoke to him at the ball, which brought on me this civility ; but I do not know his name, and he seems so little at home in the English language, that I believe his black eyes may be the best of him. Captain D'Auvergne has got a ship.

Martha and I made use of the very favourable state of yesterday for walking, to pay our duty at Chiswell. We found Mrs. Lance at home and alone, and sat out three other ladies who soon came in. We went by the ferry, and returned by the bridge, and were scarcely at all fatigued.

Edward must have enjoyed the last two days. You, I presume, had a cool drive to Canterbury. Kitty Foote came on Wednesday, and her evening visit began early enough for the last part, the apple pie, of our dinner, for we never dine now till five.

Yesterday I—or, rather, you—had a letter from Nanny Hilliard, the object of which is, that she would be very much obliged to us if we would get Hannah a place. I am sorry that I cannot assist her ; if you can, let me know, as I shall not answer the letter immediately. Mr. Sloper is married again, not much to Nanny's, or anybody's satisfaction. The lady was governess to Sir

Robert's natural children, and seems to have nothing to recommend her. I do not find, however, that Nanny is likely to lose her place in consequence. She says not a word of what service she wishes for Hannah, or what Hannah can do, but a nursery, I suppose, or something of that kind, must be the thing.

Having now cleared away my smaller articles of news, I come to a communication of some weight; no less than that my uncle and aunt[1] are going to allow James 100*l.* a year. We hear of it through Steventon. Mary sent us the other day an extract from my aunt's letter on the subject, in which the donation is made with the greatest kindness, and intended as a compensation for his loss in the conscientious refusal of Hampstead living; 100*l.* a year being all that he had at the time called its worth, as I find it was always intended at Steventon to divide the real income with Kintbury.

Nothing can be more affectionate than my aunt's language in making the present, and likewise in expressing her hope of their being much more together in future than, to her great regret, they have of late years been. My expectations for

[1] Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Perrot.

my mother do not rise with this event. We will allow a little more time, however, before we fly out.

If not prevented by parish business, James comes to us on Monday. The Mrs. Hulberts and Miss Murden are their guests at present, and likely to continue such till Christmas. Anna comes home on the 19th. The hundred a year begins next Lady-day.

I am glad you are to have Henry with you again; with him and the boys you cannot but have a cheerful, and at times even a merry, Christmas. Martha is so (MSS. torn)

. . .

We want to be settled at Chawton in time for Henry to come to us for some shooting in October, at least, or a little earlier, and Edward may visit us after taking his boys back to Winchester. Suppose we name the 4th of September. Will not that do?

I have but one thing more to tell you. Mrs. Hill called on my mother yesterday while we were gone to Chiswell, and in the course of the visit asked her whether she knew anything of a clergyman's family of the name of *Alford*, who had resided in our part of Hampshire. Mrs. Hill had been applied to as likely to give some information

of them on account of their probable vicinity to Dr. Hill's living, by a lady, or for a lady, who had known Mrs. and the two Miss Alfords in Bath, whither they had removed, it seems, from Hampshire, and who now wishes to convey to the Miss Alfords some work or trimming which she has been doing for them; but the mother and daughters have left Bath, and the lady cannot learn where they are gone to. While my mother gave us the account, the probability of its being ourselves occurred to us, and it had previously struck herself . . . . . what makes it more likely, and even indispensably to be *us*, is that she mentioned Mr. Hammond as now having the living or curacy which the father had had. I cannot think who our kind lady can be, but I dare say we shall not like the work.

Distribute the affectionate love of a heart not so tired as the right hand belonging to it.

Yours ever sincerely, J. A.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

L.

Castle Square: Tuesday (December 27).

My dear Cassandra,

I can now write at leisure and make the most of my subjects, which is lucky, as they are not numerous this week.

Our house was cleared by half-past eleven on Saturday, and we had the satisfaction of hearing yesterday that the party reached home in safety soon after five.

I was very glad of your letter this morning, for, my mother taking medicine, Eliza keeping her bed with a cold, and Choles not coming, made us rather dull and dependent on the post. You tell me much that gives me pleasure, but I think not much to answer. I wish I *could* help you in your needlework. I have two hands and a new thimble that lead a very easy life.

Lady Sondes' match surprises, but does not offend me; had her first marriage been of affection, or had there been a grown-up single daughter, I should not have forgiven her; but I consider everybody as having a right to marry *once* in their lives for love, if they can, and provided she will now leave off having bad headaches and being

pathetic, I can allow her, I can *wish* her, to be happy.

Do not imagine that your picture of your *tête-à-tête* with Sir B. makes any change in our expectations here; he could not be really reading, though he held the newspaper in his hand; he was making up his mind to the deed, and the manner of it. I think you will have a letter from him soon.

I heard from Portsmouth yesterday, and as I am to send them more clothes, they cannot be expecting a very early return to us. Mary's face is pretty well, but she must have suffered a great deal with it; an abscess was formed and opened.

Our evening party on Thursday produced nothing more remarkable than Miss Murden's coming too, though she had declined it absolutely in the morning, and sitting very ungracious and very silent with us from seven o'clock till half after eleven, for so late was it, owing to the chairmen, before we got rid of them.

The last hour, spent in yawning and shivering in a wide circle round the fire, was dull enough, but the tray had admirable success. The widgeon and the preserved ginger were as delicious as one could wish. But as to our black butter, do not

decoy anybody to Southampton by such a lure, for it is all gone. The first pot was opened when Frank and Mary were here, and proved not at all what it ought to be; it was neither solid nor entirely sweet, and on seeing it Eliza remembered that Miss Austen had said she did not think it had been boiled enough. It was made, you know, when we were absent. Such being the event of the first pot, I would not save the second, and we therefore ate it in unpretending privacy; and though not what it ought to be, part of it was very good.

James means to keep three horses on this increase of income; at present he has but one. Mary wishes the other two to be fit to carry women, and in the purchase of one Edward will probably be called upon to fulfil his promise to his godson. We have now pretty well ascertained James's income to be eleven hundred pounds, curate paid, which makes us very happy—the ascertainment as well as the income.

Mary does not talk of the garden; it may well be a disagreeable subject to her, but her husband is persuaded that nothing is wanting to make the first new one good but trenching, which is to be done by his own servants and John Bond, by

degrees, not at the expense which trenching the other amounted to.

I was happy to hear, chiefly for Anna's sake, that a ball at Manydown was once more in agitation; it is called a child's ball, and given by Mrs. Heathcote to Wm. Such was its beginning at least, but it will probably swell into something more. Edward was invited during his stay at Manydown, and it is to take place between this and Twelfth-day. Mrs. Hulbert has taken Anna a pair of white shoes on the occasion.

I forgot in my last to tell you that we hear, by way of Kintbury and the Palmers, that they were all well at Bermuda in the beginning of Nov.

Wednesday.—Yesterday must have been a day of sad remembrance at Gm. I am glad it is over. We spent Friday evening with our friends at the boarding-house, and our curiosity was gratified by the sight of their fellow-inmates, Mrs. Drew and Miss Hook, Mr. Wynne and Mr. Fitzhugh; the latter is brother to Mrs. Lance, and very much the gentleman. He has lived in that house more than twenty years, and, poor man! is so totally deaf that they say he could not hear a cannon, were it fired close to him; having no cannon at hand to make the experiment, I took it for granted, and talked

to him a little with my fingers, which was funny enough. I recommended him to read Corinna.

Miss Hook is a well-behaved, genteelish woman; Mrs. Drew well behaved, without being at all genteel. Mr. Wynne seems a chatty and rather familiar young man. Miss Murden was quite a different creature this last evening from what she had been before, owing to her having with Martha's help found a situation in the morning, which bids very fair for comfort. When she leaves Steventon, she comes to board and lodge with Mrs. Hookey, the chemist—for there is no Mr. Hookey. I cannot say that I am in any hurry for the conclusion of her present visit, but I was truly glad to see her comfortable in mind and spirits; at her age, perhaps, one may be as friendless oneself, and in similar circumstances quite as captious.

My mother has been lately adding to her possessions in plate—a whole tablespoon and a whole dessert-spoon, and six whole teaspoons—which makes our sideboard border on the magnificent. They were mostly the produce of old or useless silver. I have turned the 11*s.* in the list into 12*s.*, and the card looks all the better; a silver tea-ladle is also added, which will at least

answer the purpose of making us sometimes think of John Warren.

I have laid Lady Sondes' case before Martha, who does not make the least objection to it, and is particularly pleased with the name of Montresor. I do not agree with her there, but I like his rank very much, and always affix the ideas of strong sense and highly elegant manners to a general.

I must write to Charles next week. You may guess in what extravagant terms of praise Earle Harwood speaks of him. He is looked up to by everybody in all America.

I shall not tell you anything more of Wm. Digweed's china, as your silence on the subject makes you unworthy of it. Mrs. H. Digweed looks forward with great satisfaction to our being her neighbours. I would have her enjoy the idea to the utmost, as I suspect there will not be much in the reality. With equal pleasure *we* anticipate an intimacy with her husband's bailiff and his wife, who live close by us, and are said to be remarkably good sort of people.

Yes, yes, we *will* have a pianoforte, as good a one as can be got for thirty guineas, and I will practise country dances, that we may have some

amusement for our nephews and nieces, when we have the pleasure of their company.

Martha sends her love to Henry, and tells him that he will soon have a bill of Miss Chaplin's, about 14*l.*, to pay on her account; but the bill shall not be sent in till his return to town. I hope he comes to you in good health, and in spirits as good as a first return to Godmersham can allow. With his nephews he will force himself to be cheerful, till he really is so. Send me some intelligence of Eliza; it is a long while since I have heard of her.

We have had snow on the ground here almost a week; it is now going, but Southampton must boast no longer. We all send our love to Edward junior and his brothers, and I hope Speculation is generally liked.

Fare you well.

Yours affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

My mother has not been out of doors this week, but she keeps pretty well. We have received through Bookham an indifferent account of your godmother.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

LI.

Castle Square: Tuesday (January 10).

I am not surprised, my dear Cassandra, that you did not find my last letter very full of matter, and I wish this may not have the same deficiency; but we are doing nothing ourselves to write about, and I am therefore quite dependent upon the communications of our friends, or my own wits.

This post brought me two interesting letters, yours and one from Bookham, in answer to an enquiry of mine about your good godmother, of whom we had lately received a very alarming account from Paragon. Miss Arnold was the informant then, and she spoke of Mrs. E. L. having been very dangerously ill, and attended by a physician from Oxford.

Your letter to Adlestrop may perhaps bring you information from the spot, but in case it should not, I must tell you that she is better; though Dr. Bourne cannot yet call her out of danger; such was the case last Wednesday, and Mrs. Cooke's having had no later account is a favourable sign. I am to hear again from the latter *next* week, but not *this*, if everything goes on well.

Her disorder is an inflammation on the lungs, arising from a severe chill, taken in church last Sunday three weeks; her mind all pious composure, as may be supposed. George Cooke was there when her illness began; his brother has now taken his place. Her age and feebleness considered, one's fears cannot but preponderate, though her amendment has already surpassed the expectation of the physician at the beginning. I am sorry to add that *Becky* is laid up with a complaint of the same kind.

I am very glad to have the time of your return at all fixed; we all rejoice in it, and it will not be later than I had expected. I dare not hope that Mary and Miss Curling may be detained at Portsmouth so long or half so long; but it would be worth twopence to have it so.

The 'St. Albans' perhaps may soon be off to help bring home what may remain by this time of our poor army, whose state seems dreadfully critical. The 'Regency' seems to have been heard of only here; my most political correspondents make no mention of it. Unlucky that I should have wasted so much reflection on the subject.

I can now answer your question to my mother more at large, and likewise more at small—with

equal perspicuity and minuteness ; for the very day of our leaving Southampton is fixed ; and if the knowledge is of no *use* to Edward, I am sure it will give him pleasure. Easter Monday, April 3, is the day ; we are to sleep that night at Alton, and be with our friends at Bookham the next, if they are then at home ; there we remain till the following Monday, and on Tuesday, April 11, hope to be at Godmersham. If the Cookes are absent, we shall finish our journey on the 5th. These plans depend of course upon the weather, but I hope there will be no settled cold to delay us materially.

To make you amends for being at Bookham, it is in contemplation to spend a few days at Baiton Lodge in our way *out* of Kent. The hint of such a visit is most affectionately welcomed by Mrs. Birch, in one of her odd pleasant letters lately, in which she speaks of *us* with the usual distinguished kindness, declaring that she shall not be at all satisfied unless a very *handsome* present is made us immediately from one quarter.

Fanny's not coming with you is no more than we expected, and as we have not the hope of a bed for her, and shall see her so soon afterwards at Godmersham, we cannot wish it otherwise.

William will be quite recovered, I trust, by the time you receive this. What a comfort his cross-stitch must have been! Pray tell him that I should like to see his work very much. I hope our answers this morning have given satisfaction; we had great pleasure in Uncle Deedes' packet; and pray let Marianne know, in private, that I think she is quite right to work a rug for Uncle John's coffee urn, and that I am sure it must give great pleasure to herself now, and to him when he receives it.

The preference of Brag over Speculation does not greatly surprise me, I believe, because I feel the same myself; but it mortifies me deeply, because Speculation was under my patronage; and, after all, what is there so delightful in a pair royal of Braggers? It is but three nines or three knaves, or a mixture of them. When one comes to reason upon it, it cannot stand its ground against Speculation—of which I hope Edward is now convinced. Give my love to him if he is.

The letter from Paragon before mentioned was much like those which had preceded it, as to the felicity of its writer. They found their house so dirty and so damp that they were obliged to be a week at an inn. John Binns had behaved most

unhandsomely and engaged himself elsewhere. They *have* a man, however, on the same footing, which my aunt does not like, and she finds both him and the new maidservant very, very inferior to Robert and Martha. Whether they mean to have any other domestics does not appear, nor whether they are to have a carriage while they are in Bath.

The Holders are as usual, though I believe it is not very usual for them to be happy, which they now are at a great rate, in Hooper's marriage. The Irvines are not mentioned. The American lady improved as we went on; but still the same faults in part recurred.

We are now in Margiana, and like it very well indeed. We are just going to set off for Northumberland to be shut up in Widdrington Tower, where there must be two or three sets of victims already immured under a very fine villain.

Wednesday.—Your report of Eliza's health gives me great pleasure, and the progress of the bank is a constant source of satisfaction. With such increasing profits, tell Henry that I hope he will not work poor High-diddle so hard as he used to do.

Has your newspaper given a sad story of a

Mrs. Middleton, wife of a farmer in Yorkshire, her sister, and servant, being almost frozen to death in the late weather, her little child quite so? I hope the sister is not our friend Miss Woodd, and I rather think her brother-in-law had moved into Lincolnshire, but their name and station accord too well. Mrs. M. and the maid are said to be tolerably recovered, but the sister is likely to lose the use of her limbs.

Charles's rug will be finished to-day, and sent to-morrow to Frank, to be consigned by him to Mr. Turner's care; and I am going to send Marmion out with it—very generous in me, I think.

As we have no letter from Adlestrop, we may suppose the good woman was alive on Monday, but I cannot help expecting bad news from thence or Bookham in a few days. Do you continue quite well?

Have you nothing to say of your little namesake? We join in love and many happy returns.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

The Manydown ball was a smaller thing than I expected, but it seems to have made Anna very happy. At *her* age it would not have done for *me*.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

LII.

Castle Square: Tuesday (January 17).

My dear Cassandra,

I am happy to say that we had no second letter from Bookham last week. Yours has brought its usual measure of satisfaction and amusement, and I beg your acceptance of all the thanks due on the occasion. Your offer of cravats is very kind, and happens to be particularly adapted to my wants, but it was an odd thing to occur to you.

Yes, we have got another fall of snow, and are very dreadful; everything seems to turn to snow this winter.

I hope you have had no more illness among you, and that William will be soon as well as ever. His working a footstool for Chawton is a most agreeable surprise to me, and I am sure his grandmamma will value it very much as a proof of his affection and industry, but we shall never have the heart to put our feet upon it. I believe I must work a muslin cover in satin stitch to keep it from the dirt. I long to know what his colours are. I guess greens and purples.

Edward and Henry have started a difficulty respecting our journey, which, I must own with

some confusion, had never been thought of by us; but if the former expected by it to prevent our travelling into Kent entirely he will be disappointed, for we have already determined to go the Croydon road on leaving Bookham and sleep at Dartford. Will not that do? There certainly does seem no convenient resting-place on the other road.

Anna went to Clanville last Friday, and I have hopes of her new aunt's being really worth her knowing. Perhaps you may never have heard that James and Mary paid a morning visit there in form some weeks ago, and Mary, though by no means disposed to like her, was very much pleased with her indeed. *Her* praise, to be sure, proves nothing more than Mrs. M.'s being civil and attentive to them, but her being so is in favour of her having good sense. Mary writes of Anna as improved in person, but gives her no other commendation. I am afraid her absence now may deprive her of one pleasure, for that silly Mr. Hammond is actually to give his ball on Friday.

We had some reason to expect a visit from Earle Harwood and James this week, but they do not come. Miss Murden arrived last night at Mrs. Hookey's, as a message and a basket announced to

us. You will therefore return to an enlarged and, of course, improved society here, especially as the Miss Williamses are come back.

We were agreeably surprised the other day by a visit from your beauty and mine, each in a new cloth mantle and bonnet; and I daresay you will value yourself much on the modest propriety of Miss W.'s taste, hers being purple and Miss Grace's scarlet.

I can easily suppose that your six weeks here will be fully occupied, were it only in lengthening the waists of your gowns. I have pretty well arranged my spring and summer plans of that kind, and mean to wear out my spotted muslin before I go. You will exclaim at this, but mine really has signs of feebleness, which, with a little care, may come to something.

Martha and Dr. Mant are as bad as ever; he runs after her in the street to apologise for having spoken to a gentleman while *she* was near him the day before. Poor Mrs. Mant can stand it no longer; she is retired to one of her married daughters'.

When William returns to Winchester Mary Jane is to go to Mrs. Nune's for a month, and then to Steventon for a fortnight, and it seems likely

that she and her Aunt Martha may travel into Berkshire together.

We shall not have a month of Martha after your return, and that month will be a very interrupted and broken one, but we shall enjoy ourselves the more when we *can* get a quiet half-hour together.

To set against your new novel, of which nobody ever heard before, and perhaps never may again, we have got *Ida of Athens*, by Miss Owenson, which must be very clever, because it was written, as the authoress says, in three months. We have only read the preface yet, but her Irish girl does not make me expect much. If the warmth of her language could affect the body it might be worth reading in this weather.

Adieu! I must leave off to stir the fire and call on Miss Murden

Evening. — I have done them both, the first very often. We found our friend as comfortable as she can ever allow herself to be in cold weather. There is a very neat parlour behind the shop for her to sit in, not very light indeed, being *à la* Southampton, the middle of three deep, but very lively from the frequent sound of the pestle and mortar.

We afterwards called on the Miss Williamses, who lodge at Durantoy's. Miss Mary only was at home, and she is in very indifferent health. Dr. Hacket came in while we were there, and said that he never remembered such a severe winter as this in Southampton before. It is bad, but we do not suffer as we did last year, because the wind has been more N.E. than N.W.

For a day or two last week my mother was very poorly with a return of *one* of her old complaints, but it did not last long, and seems to have left nothing bad behind it. She began to talk of a serious illness, her two last having been preceded by the same symptoms, but, thank heaven! she is now quite as well as one can expect her to be in weather which deprives her of exercise.

Miss M. conveys to us a third volume of sermons, from Hamstall, just published, and which we are to like better than the two others; they are professedly *practical*, and for the use of country congregations. I have just received some verses in an unknown hand, and am desired to forward them to my nephew Edward at Godmersham.

> Alas! poor Brag, thou boastful game!
> What now avails thine empty name?
> Where now thy more distinguished fame?
> My day is o'er, and thine the same,

For thou, like me, art thrown aside
At Godmersham, this Christmas tide;
And now across the table wide
Each game save brag or spec. is tried.
Such is the mild ejaculation
Of tender-hearted speculation.

Wednesday.—I expected to have a letter from somebody to-day, but I have not. Twice every day I think of a letter from Portsmouth.

Miss Murden has been sitting with us this morning. As yet she seems very well pleased with her situation. The worst part of her being in Southampton will be the necessity of one walking with her now and then, for she talks so loud that one is quite ashamed; but our dining hours are luckily very different, which we shall take all reasonable advantage of.

The Queen's birthday moves the Assembly to this night instead of last, and, as it is always fully attended, Martha and I expect an amusing show. We were in hopes of being independent of other companions by having the attendance of Mr. Austen and Captain Harwood; but, as they fail us, we are obliged to look out for other help, and have fixed on the Wallops as least likely to be troublesome. I have called on them this morning and found them very willing, and I am sorry that you

must wait a whole week for the particulars of the evening. I propose being asked to dance by our acquaintance Mr. Smith, now *Captain* Smith, who has lately re-appeared in Southampton, but I shall decline it. He saw Charles last August.

What an alarming bride Mrs. . . . must have been; such a parade is one of the most immodest pieces of modesty that one can imagine. To *attract* notice could have been her only wish. It augurs ill for her family; it announces not *great* sense, and therefore ensures boundless influence.

I hope Fanny's visit is now taking place. You have said scarcely anything of her lately, but I trust you are as good friends as ever.

Martha sends her love, and hopes to have the pleasure of seeing you when you return to Southampton. You are to understand this message as being merely for the sake of a message to oblige me.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

Henry never sent his love to me in your last, but I send him mine.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

LIII.

Castle Square: Tuesday (January 24).

My dear Cassandra.

I will give you the indulgence of a letter on Thursday this week, instead of Friday, but I do not require you to write again before Sunday, provided I may believe you and your finger going on quite well. Take care of your precious self; do not work too hard. Remember that Aunt Cassandras are quite as scarce as Miss Beverleys.[1]

I had the happiness yesterday of a letter from Charles, but I shall say as little about it as possible, because I know *that* excruciating Henry will have had a letter likewise, to make all my intelligence valueless. It was written at Bermuda on the 7th and 10th of December. All well, and Fanny still only in expectation of being otherwise. He had taken a small prize in his late cruise—a French schooner, laden with sugar; but bad weather parted them, and she had not yet been heard of. His cruise ended December 1st. My September letter was the latest he had received.

This day three weeks you are to be in London, and I wish you better weather; not but that you

[1] 'Cecilia' Beverley, the heroine of Miss Burney's novel.

may have worse, for we have now nothing but ceaseless snow or rain and insufferable dirt to complain of; no tempestuous winds nor severity of cold. Since I wrote last we have had something of each, but it is not genteel to rip up old grievances.

You used me scandalously by not mentioning Edward Cooper's sermons. I tell you everything, and it is unknown the mysteries you conceal from me; and, to add to the rest, you persevere in giving a final e to invalid, thereby putting it out of one's power to suppose Mrs. E. Leigh, even for a moment, a veteran soldier. She, good woman, is, I hope, destined for some further placid enjoyment of her own excellence in this world, for her recovery advances exceedingly well.

I had this pleasant news in a letter from Bookham last Thursday, but, as the letter was from Mary instead of her mother, you will guess her account was not equally good from home. Mrs. Cooke had been confined to her bed some days by illness, but was then better, and Mary wrote in confidence of her continuing to mend. I have desired to hear again soon.

You rejoice me by what you say of Fanny. I hope she will not turn good-for-nothing this ever

so long. We thought of and talked of her yesterday with sincere affection, and wished her a long enjoyment of all the happiness to which she seems born. While she gives happiness to those about her she is pretty sure of her own share.

I am gratified by her having pleasure in what I write, but I wish the knowledge of my being exposed to her discerning criticism may not hurt my style, by inducing too great a solicitude. I begin already to weigh my words and sentences more than I did, and am looking about for a sentiment, an illustration, or a metaphor in every corner of the room. Could my ideas flow as fast as the rain in the store-closet it would be charming.

We have been in two or three dreadful states within the last week, from the melting of the snow, &c., and the contest between us and the closet has now ended in our defeat. I have been obliged to move almost everything out of it, and leave it to splash itself as it likes.

You have by no means raised my curiosity after Caleb. My disinclination for it before was affected, but now it is real. I do not like the evangelicals. Of course I shall be delighted when I read it, like other people, but till I do I dislike it.

I am sorry my verses did not bring any return from Edward. I was in hopes they might, but I suppose he does not rate them high enough. It might be partiality, but they seemed to me purely classical—just like Homer and Virgil, Ovid and Propria que Maribus.

I had a nice brotherly letter from Frank the other day, which, after an interval of nearly three weeks, was very welcome. No orders were come on Friday, and none were come yesterday, or we should have heard to-day. I had supposed Miss C. would share her cousin's room here, but a message in this letter proves the contrary. I will make the garret as comfortable as I can, but the possibilities of that apartment are not great.

My mother has been talking to Eliza about our future home, and *she*, making no difficulty at all of the sweetheart, is perfectly disposed to continue with us, but till she has written home for *mother's* approbation cannot quite decide. *Mother* does not like to have her so far off. At Chawton she will be nine or ten miles nearer, which I hope will have its due influence.

As for Sally, she means to play John Binns with us, in her anxiety to belong to our household again. Hitherto she appears a very good servant.

You depend upon finding all your plants dead, I hope. They look very ill, I understand.

Your silence on the subject of our ball makes me suppose your curiosity too great for words. We were very well entertained, and could have stayed longer but for the arrival of my list shoes to convey me home, and I did not like to keep them waiting in the cold. The room was tolerably full, and the ball opened by Miss Glyn. The Miss Lances had partners, Captain Dauvergne's friend appeared in regimentals, Caroline Maitland had an officer to flirt with, and Mr. John Harrison was deputed by Captain Smith, being himself absent, to ask me to dance. Everything went well, you see, especially after we had tucked Mrs. Lance's neckerchief in behind and fastened it with a pin.

We had a very full and agreeable account of Mr. Hammond's ball from Anna last night; the same fluent pen has sent similar information, I know, into Kent. She seems to have been as happy as one could wish her, and the complacency of her mamma in doing the honours of the evening must have made her pleasure almost as great. The grandeur of the meeting was beyond my hopes. I should like to have seen Anna's looks

and performance, but that sad cropped head must have injured the former.

Martha pleases herself with believing that if I had kept her counsel you would never have heard of Dr. M.'s late behaviour, as if the very slight manner in which I mentioned it could have been all on which you found your judgment. I do not endeavour to undeceive her, because I wish her happy, at all events, and know how highly she prizes happiness of any kind. She is, moreover, so full of kindness for us both, and sends you in particular so many good wishes about your finger, that I am willing to overlook a venial fault, and as Dr. M. is a clergyman, their attachment, however immoral, has a decorous air. Adieu, sweet You. This is grievous news from Spain. It is well that Dr. Moore was spared the knowledge of such a son's death.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

Anna's hand gets better and better; it begins to be too good for any consequence.

We send best love to dear little Lizzy and Marianne in particular.

The Portsmouth paper gave a melancholy history of a poor mad woman, escaped from con-

finement, who said her husband and daughter, of the name of Payne, lived at Ashford, in Kent. Do you own them?

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

LIV.

Castle Square: Monday (January 30).

My dear Cassandra,

I was not much surprised yesterday by the agreeable surprise of your letter, and extremely glad to receive the assurance of your finger being well again.

Here is such a wet day as never was seen. I wish the poor little girls had better weather for their journey; they must amuse themselves with watching the raindrops down the windows. Sackree, I suppose, feels quite broken-hearted. I cannot have done with the weather without observing how delightfully mild it is; I am sure Fanny must enjoy it with us. Yesterday was a very blowing day; we got to church, however, which we had not been able to do for two Sundays before.

I am not at all ashamed about the name of the

novel, having been guilty of no insult towards your handwriting; the diphthong I always saw, but knowing how fond you were of adding a vowel wherever you could, I attributed it to that alone, and the knowledge of the truth does the book no service; the only merit it could have was in the name of Caleb, which has an honest, unpretending sound, but in Cœlebs there is pedantry and affectation. Is it written only to classical scholars?

I shall now try to say only what is necessary, I am weary of meandering; so expect a vast deal of small matter, concisely told, in the next two pages.

Mrs. Cooke has been very dangerously ill, but is now, I hope, safe. I had a letter last week from George, Mary being too busy to write, and at that time the disorder was called of the typhus kind, and their alarm considerable, but yesterday brought me a much better account from Mary, the origin of the complaint being now ascertained to be bilious, and the strong medicines requisite promising to be effectual. Mrs. E. L. is so much recovered as to get into the dressing-room every day.

A letter from Hamstall gives us the history of

Sir Tho. Williams's return. The Admiral, whoever he might be, took a fancy to the 'Neptune,' and having only a worn-out 74 to offer in lieu of it, Sir Tho. declined such a command, and is come home passenger. Lucky man! to have so fair an opportunity of escape. I hope his wife allows herself to be happy on the occasion, and does not give all her thoughts to being nervous.

A great event happens this week at Hamstall in young Edward's removal to school. He is going to Rugby, and is very happy in the idea of it; I wish his happiness may last, but it will be a great change to become a raw school-boy from being a pompous sermon-writer and a domineering brother. It will do him good, I dare say.

Caroline has had a great escape from being burnt to death lately. As her husband gives the account, we must believe it true. Miss Murden is gone—called away by the critical state of Mrs. Pottinger, who has had another severe stroke, and is without sense or speech. Miss Murden wishes to return to Southampton if circumstances suit, but it must be very doubtful.

We have been obliged to turn away Cholles, he grew so very drunken and negligent, and we have a man in his place called Thomas.

Martha desires me to communicate something concerning herself which she knows will give you pleasure, as affording her very particular satisfaction—it is, that she is to be in town this spring with Mrs. Dundas. I need not dilate on the subject. You understand enough of the whys and wherefores to enter into her feelings, and to be conscious that of all possible arrangements it is the one most acceptable to her. She goes to Barton on leaving us, and the family remove to town in April.

What you tell me of Miss Sharpe is quite new, and surprises me a little; I feel, however, as you do. She is born, poor thing! to struggle with evil, and her continuing with Miss B. is, I hope, a proof that matters are not always so very bad between them as her letters sometimes represent.

Jenny's marriage I had heard of, and supposed you would do so too from Steventon, as I knew you were corresponding with Mary at the time. I hope she will not sully the respectable name she now bears.

Your plan for Miss Curling is uncommonly considerate and friendly, and such as she must surely jump at. Edward's going round by Steventon, as I understand he promises to do,

can be no reasonable objection; Mrs. J. Austen's hospitality is just of the kind to enjoy such a visitor.

We were very glad to know Aunt Fanny was in the country when we read of the fire. Pray give my best compliments to the Mrs. Finches, if they are at Gm. I am sorry to find that Sir J. Moore has a mother living, but though a very heroic son he might not be a very necessary one to her happiness. Deacon Morrell may be more to Mrs. Morrell.

I wish Sir John had united something of the Christian with the hero in his death. Thank heaven! we have had no one to care for particularly among the troops—no one, in fact, nearer to us than Sir John himself. Col. Maitland is safe and well; his mother and sisters were of course anxious about him, but there is no entering much into the solicitudes of that family.

My mother is well, and gets out when she can with the same enjoyment, and apparently the same strength, as hitherto. She hopes you will not omit begging Mrs. Seward to get the garden cropped for us, supposing she leaves the house too early to make the garden any object to herself. We are very desirous of receiving *your* account of the

house, for your observations will have a motive which can leave nothing to conjecture and suffer nothing from want of memory. For one's own dear self, one ascertains and remembers everything.

Lady Sondes is an impudent woman to come back into her old neighbourhood again ; I suppose she pretends never to have married before, and wonders how her father and mother came to have her christened Lady Sondes.

The store closet, I hope, will never do so again, for much of the evil is proved to have proceeded from the gutter being choked up, and we have had it cleared. We had reason to rejoice in the child's absence at the time of the thaw, for the nursery was not habitable. We hear of similar disasters from almost everybody.

No news from Portsmouth. We are very patient. Mrs. Charles Fowle desires to be kindly remembered to you. She is warmly interested in my brother and his family.

Yours very affectionately, J. Austen.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

1811

The first three of these are from Sloane Street, where Jane was at this time visiting her brother Henry and his wife Eliza, to whom frequent reference is made. They are lively letters, and she seems to have enjoyed herself thoroughly, and to have had plenty of amusement of one sort and another. 'The D'Entraigues and Comte Julien' were doubtless friends of 'Eliza,' whose first husband had been a Frenchman; the Cookes and Tilsons I have already mentioned, and nobody else in the fifty-fifth letter seems to require special attention. The fifty-sixth contains some interesting allusions to 'S. and S.' ('Sense and Sensibility'), from which I gather that some of her home critics had thought that she put the incomes of her heroes and heroines either too low or too high. It may be remarked that, as she told us in another letter that Elizabeth was her favourite character in 'Pride and Prejudice,' so, with regard to the novel now under discussion, she has most reliance on a favourable reception for its heroine Elinor. Then comes an amusing description of her sister-in-law's musical party, where the drawing-room

becoming too hot (an example constantly followed with fidelity by modern drawing-rooms under similar circumstances), Jane stood in the passage surrounded by gentlemen (just as other Janes have frequently done), and no doubt contributed greatly to the pleasure of the evening. I cannot pretend to interpret the message sent to 'Fanny' respecting the 'first glee,' which is written in a 'gibberish' probably only understood by the sender and receiver of the same. We must therefore be satisfied with knowing that 'the music was extremely good,' that the professionals, who were paid for it, sang very well, and the amateurs, who were not paid for it, would not sing at all. The Play was a favourite amusement of Jane's; she seems to have gone to one or more every time she was in London. One is sorry to gather from this letter that Eliza caught cold from getting out of her carriage into the night air when the horses 'actually gibbed,' and one wonders what '*that* quarter' was from which Aunt Jane supposed that 'the alloy of Fanny's happiness' would come; but, having no clue to the mystery, one can do no more than wonder. From the fifty-seventh letter we gather that Mr. W. K. (Wyndham Knatchbull) thought

Jane 'a pleasant-looking young woman,' and we have another 'gibberish' message to Fanny, and in a reference to a lady who is 'most happily married' to a gentleman who 'is very religious and has got black whiskers,' one detects a touch of that peculiar humour which so often amuses us in the novels.

The fifty-eighth letter imparts the interesting intelligence of a cousin's marriage, which I find duly authenticated by 'Burke's Landed Gentry,' which chronicles the fact that General Orde's first wife was Margaret Maria Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Wm. Beckford, Esq., of Fonthill, Wilts, and that they were married in 1811, her sister 'Susan Euphemia' having married the tenth Duke of Hamilton (then Marquis of Douglas) in 1810; but how these ladies were cousins to Jane Austen I cannot make out, and am not disposed to stop and inquire. 'Poor John Bridges!' probably refers to his state of health. He married Charlotte Hawley in 1810, and died in 1812; and having lived much at Godmersham, it was natural that 'our own dear brother' (Mr. Knight) should be affected by his illness and early death. Mrs. Harding, who came from Dummer (a little village five miles from

Basingstoke) to Chawton with the Terrys, was Dionysia, daughter of Sir Bouchier Wrey, wife of Richard Harding, Esq., of Upcott, and sister to Mrs. Nicholas Toke, of Godinton, whom she had therefore a perfect right to resemble if she pleased, but it seems that she did *not*. We learn from this letter that Jane had 'uncomfortable feelings' in thunderstorms, that several clerical changes in the neighbourhood were impending, and that Mr. Prowting [1] had opened a gravel-pit, but there is nothing in these circumstances which seems to call for remark. The fifty-ninth letter opens with a project for a visit from Miss Sharpe, and the rest of it is filled with various details which may be left to speak for themselves. The sixtieth refers to difficulties relating to the proposed Sharpe visit, but tells of a 'very pleasant' one made to Chawton by Henry Austen and Mr. Tilson, and informs us, writing on Thursday, June 6, that they 'began peas on Sunday' exactly two days before the orthodox time, which from King George the Third's accession until his death was always held to be 'the good King's Birthday'—

[1] The Prowtings were a family who had lived on their own property in Chawton for some 200 years, and a descendant still lives there.

namely, June 4—so that the loyal inmates of Chawton Cottage should have restrained their appetites until the Tuesday. There is not much more in this letter, and then we have unfortunately another gap of nearly two letterless years, there being none in my collection from June 6, 1811, until May 24, 1813.

LV.

Sloane St.: Thursday (April 18).

My dear Cassandra,

I have so many little matters to tell you of, that I cannot wait any longer before I begin to put them down. I spent Tuesday in Bentinck Street. The Cookes called here and took me back, and it was quite a Cooke day, for the Miss Rolles paid a visit while I was there, and Sam Arnold dropped in to tea.

The badness of the weather disconcerted an excellent plan of mine—that of calling on Miss Beckford again; but from the middle of the day it rained incessantly. Mary and I, after disposing of her father and mother, went to the Liverpool Museum and the British Gallery, and I had some amusement at each, though my preference for men

and women always inclines me to attend more to the company than the sight.

Mrs. Cooke regrets very much that she did not see you when you called; it was owing to a blunder among the servants, for she did not know of our visit till we were gone. She seems tolerably well, but the nervous part of her complaint, I fear, increases, and makes her more and more unwilling to part with Mary.

I have proposed to the latter that she should go to Chawton with me, on the supposition of my travelling the Guildford road, and *she*, I do believe, would be glad to do it, but perhaps it may be impossible; unless a brother can be at home at that time, it certainly must. George comes to them to-day.

I did not see Theo. till late on Tuesday; he was gone to Ilford, but he came back in time to show his usual nothing-meaning, harmless, heartless civility. Henry, who had been confined the whole day to the bank, took me in his way home, and, after putting life and wit into the party for a quarter of an hour, put himself and his sister into a hackney coach.

I bless my stars that I have done with Tuesday. But, alas! Wednesday was likewise a day of great

doings, for Manon and I took our walk to Grafton House, and I have a good deal to say on that subject.

I am sorry to tell you that I am getting very extravagant, and spending all my money, and, what is worse for *you*, I have been spending yours too; for in a linendraper's shop to which I went for checked muslin, and for which I was obliged to give seven shillings a yard, I was tempted by a pretty-coloured muslin, and bought ten yards of it on the chance of your liking it; but, at the same time, if it should not suit you, you must not think yourself at all obliged to take it; it is only 3*s.* 6*d.* per yard, and I should not in the least mind keeping the whole. In texture it is just what we prefer, but its resemblance to green crewels, I must own, is not great, for the pattern is a small red spot. And now I believe I have done all my commissions except Wedgwood.

I liked my walk very much; it was shorter than I had expected, and the weather was delightful. We set off immediately after breakfast, and must have reached Grafton House by half-past 11; but when we entered the shop the whole counter was thronged, and we waited *full* half an hour before ve could be attended to. When we were served,

however, I was very well satisfied with my purchases—my bugle trimming at 2*s.* 4*d.* and three pair silk stockings for a little less than 12*s.* a pair.

In my way back who should I meet but Mr. Moore, just come from Beckenham. I believe he would have passed me if I had not made him stop, but we were delighted to meet. I soon found, however, that he had nothing new to tell me, and then I let him go.

Miss Burton has made me a very pretty little bonnet, and now nothing can satisfy me but I must have a straw hat, of the riding-hat shape, like Mrs. Tilson's; and a young woman in this neighbourhood is actually making me one. I am really very shocking, but it will not be dear at a guinea. Our pelisses are 17*s.* each; she charges only 8*s.* for the making, but the buttons seem expensive—are expensive, I might have said, for the fact is plain enough.

We drank tea again yesterday with the Tilsons, and met the Smiths. I find all these little parties very pleasant. I like Mrs. S.; Miss Beaty is good-humour itself, and does not seem much besides. We spend to-morrow evening with them, and are to meet the Coln. and Mrs. *Cantelo* Smith you have

been used to hear of, and, if she is in good humour, are likely to have excellent singing.

To-night I might have been at the play; Henry had kindly planned our going together to the Lyceum, but I have a cold which I should not like to make worse before Saturday, so I stay within all this day.

Eliza is walking out by herself. She has plenty of business on her hands just now, for the day of the party is settled, and drawing near. Above 80 people are invited for next Tuesday evening, and there is to be some very good music—five professionals, three of them glee singers, besides amateurs. Fanny will listen to this. One of the hirelings is a Capital on the harp, from which I expect great pleasure. The foundation of the party was a dinner to Henry Egerton and Henry Walter, but the latter leaves town the day before. I am sorry, as I wished *her* prejudice to be done away, but should have been more sorry if there had been no invitation.

I am a wretch, to be so occupied with all these things as to seem to have no thoughts to give to people and circumstances which really supply a far more lasting interest—the society in which you are; but I do think of you all, I assure you, and want to know all about everybody, and especially

about your visit to the W. Friars; 'mais le moyen' not to be occupied by one's own concerns?

Saturday.—Frank is superseded in the 'Caledonia.' Henry brought us this news yesterday from Mr. Daysh, and he heard at the same time that Charles may be in England in the course of a month. Sir Edward Pollen succeeds Lord Gambier in his command, and some captain of his succeeds Frank; and I believe the order is already gone out. Henry means to enquire farther to-day. He wrote to Mary on the occasion. This is something to think of. Henry is convinced that he will have the offer of something else, but does not think it will be at all incumbent on him to accept it; and then follows, what will he do? and where will he live?

I hope to hear from you to-day. How are you as to health, strength, looks, &c.? I had a very comfortable account from Chawton yesterday.

If the weather permits, Eliza and I walk into London this morning. *She* is in want of chimney lights for Tuesday, and I of an ounce of darning cotton. She has resolved not to venture to the play to-night. The D'Entraigues and Comte Julien cannot come to the party, which was at first a grief, but she has since supplied herself so well

with performers that it is of no consequence ; their not coming has produced our going to them to-morrow evening, which I like the idea of. It will be amusing to see the ways of a French circle.

I wrote to Mrs. Hill a few days ago, and have received a most kind and satisfactory answer. Any time the first week in May exactly suits her, and therefore I consider my going as tolerably fixed. I shall leave Sloane Street on the 1st or 2nd, and be ready for James on the 9th, and, if his plan alters, I can take care of myself. I have explained my views here, and everything is smooth and pleasant ; and Eliza talks kindly of conveying me to Streatham.

We met the Tilsons yesterday evening, but the singing Smiths sent an excuse, which put our Mrs. Smith out of humour.

We are come back, after a good dose of walking and coaching, and I have the pleasure of your letter. I wish I had James's verses, but they were left at Chawton. When I return thither, if Mrs. K. will give me leave, I will send them to her.

Our first object to-day was Henrietta St., to consult with Henry in consequence of a very unlucky change of the play for this very night—'Hamlet' instead of 'King John'—and we are to

go on Monday to 'Macbeth' instead; but it is a disappointment to us both.

Love to all.

Yours affectionately, JANE.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

LVI.

Sloane St.: Thursday (April 25).

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA,

I can return the compliment by thanking you for the unexpected pleasure of *your* letter yesterday, and as I like unexpected pleasure, it made me very happy; and, indeed, you need not apologise for your letter in any respect, for it is all very fine, but not *too* fine, I hope, to be written again, or something like it.

I think Edward will not suffer much longer from heat; by the look of things this morning I suspect the weather is rising into the balsamic north-east. It has been hot here, as you may suppose, since it was so hot with you, but I have not suffered from it at all, nor felt it in such a degree as to make me imagine it would be anything in the country. Everybody has talked of the heat, but I set it all down to London.

I give you joy of our new nephew, and hope if he ever comes to be hanged it will not be till we are too old to care about it. It is a great comfort to have it so safely and speedily over. The Miss Curlings must be hard worked in writing so many letters, but the novelty of it may recommend it to *them*; mine was from Miss Eliza, and she says that my brother may arrive to-day.

No, indeed, I am never too busy to think of S. and S. I can no more forget it than a mother can forget her sucking child; and I am much obliged to you for your enquiries. I have had two sheets to correct, but the last only brings us to Willoughby's first appearance. Mrs. K. regrets in the most flattering manner that she must wait *till* May, but I have scarcely a hope of its being out in June. Henry does not neglect it; he *has* hurried the printer, and says he will see him again to-day. It will not stand still during his absence, it will be sent to Eliza.

The *Incomes* remain as they were, but I will get them altered if I can. I am very much gratified by Mrs. K.'s interest in it; and whatever may be the event of it as to my credit with her, sincerely wish her curioisty could be satisfied sooner than

is now probable. I think she will like my Elinor, but cannot build on anything else.

Our party went off extremely well. There were many solicitudes, alarms, and vexations, beforehand, of course, but at last everything was quite right. The rooms were dressed up with flowers, &c., and looked very pretty. A glass for the mantlepiece was lent by the man who is making their own. Mr. Egerton and Mr. Walter came at half-past five, and the festivities began with a pair of very fine soals.

Yes, Mr. Walter—for he postponed his leaving London on purpose—which did not give much pleasure at the time, any more than the circumstance from which it rose—his calling on Sunday and being asked by Henry to take the family dinner on that day, which he did; but it is all smoothed over now, and she likes him very well.

At half-past seven arrived the musicians in two hackney coaches, and by eight the lordly company began to appear. Among the earliest were George and Mary Cooke, and I spent the greatest part of the evening very pleasantly with them. The drawing-room being soon hotter than we liked, we placed ourselves in the connecting passage, which was comparatively cool, and gave us all the ad-

vantage of the music at a pleasant distance, as well as that of the first view of every new comer.

I was quite surrounded by acquaintance, especially gentlemen; and what with Mr. Hampson, Mr. Seymour, Mr. W. Knatchbull, Mr. Guillemarde, Mr. Cure, a Captain Simpson, brother to *the* Captain Simpson, besides Mr. Walter and Mr. Egerton, in addition to the Cookes, and Miss Beckford, and Miss Middleton, I had quite as much upon my hands as I could do.

Poor Miss B. has been suffering again from her old complaint, and looks thinner than ever. She certainly goes to Cheltenham the beginning of June. We were all delight and cordiality of course. Miss M. seems very happy, but has not beauty enough to figure in London.

Including everybody we were sixty-six—which was considerably more than Eliza had expected, and quite enough to fill the back drawing-room and leave a few to be scattered about in the other and in the passage.

The music was extremely good. It opened (tell Fanny) with 'Poike de Parp pirs praise pof Prapela;' and of the other glees I remember, 'In peace love tunes,' 'Rosabelle,' 'The Red Cross Knight,' and 'Poor Insect.' Between the songs

were lessons on the harp, or harp and pianoforte together; and the harp-player was Wiepart, whose name seems famous, though new to me. There was one female singer, a short Miss Davis, all in blue, bringing up for the public line, whose voice was said to be very fine indeed; and all the performers gave great satisfaction by doing what they were paid for, and giving themselves no airs. No amateur could be persuaded to do anything.

The house was not clear till after twelve. If you wish to hear more of it, you must put your questions, but I seem rather to have exhausted than spared the subject.

This said Captain Simpson told us, on the authority of some other Captain just arrived from Halifax, that Charles was bringing the 'Cleopatra' home, and that she was probably by this time in the Channel; but, as Captain S. was certainly in liquor, we must not quite depend on it. It must give one a sort of expectation, however, and will prevent my writing to him any more. I would rather he should not reach England till I am at home, and the Steventon party gone.

My mother and Martha both write with great satisfaction of Anna's behaviour. She is quite an Anna with variations, but she cannot have reached

her last, for that is always the most flourishing and showy; she is at about her third or fourth, which are generally simple and pretty.

Your lilacs are in leaf, *ours* are in bloom. The horse-chestnuts are quite out, and the elms almost. I had a pleasant walk in Kensington Gardens on Sunday with Henry, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Tilson; everything was fresh and beautiful.

We *did* go to the play after all on Saturday. We went to the Lyceum, and saw the 'Hypocrite,' an old play taken from Molière's 'Tartuffe,' and were well entertained. Dowton and Mathews were the good actors; Mrs. Edwin was the heroine, and her performance is just what it used to be. I have no chance of seeing Mrs. Siddons; she *did* act on Monday, but, as Henry was told by the box-keeper that he did not think she would, the plans, and all thought of it, were given up. I should particularly have liked seeing her in 'Constance,' and could swear at her with little effort for disappointing me.

Henry has been to the Water-Colour Exhibition, which opened on Monday, and is to meet us there again some morning. If Eliza cannot go (and she has a cold at present) Miss Beaty will be invited to be my companion. Henry leaves town on Sunday

afternoon, but he means to write soon himself to Edward, and will tell his own plans.

The tea is this moment setting out.

Do not have your coloured muslin unless you really want it, because I am afraid I could not send it to the coach without giving trouble here.

Eliza caught her cold on Sunday in our way to the D'Entraigues. The horses actually gibbed on this side of Hyde Park Gate: a load of fresh gravel made it a formidable hill to them, and they refused the collar; I believe there was a sore shoulder to irritate. Eliza was frightened and we got out, and were detained in the evening air several minutes. The cold is in her chest, but she takes care of herself, and I hope it may not last long.

This engagement prevented Mr. Walter's staying late—he had his coffee and went away. Eliza enjoyed her evening very much, and means to cultivate the acquaintance; and I see nothing to dislike in them but their taking quantities of snuff. Monsieur, the old Count, is a very fine-looking man, with quiet manners, good enough for an Englishman, and, I believe, is a man of great information and taste. He has some fine paintings, which delighted Henry as much as the son's music gratified Eliza; and among them a miniature of

Philip V. of Spain, Louis XIV.'s grandson, which exactly suited *my* capacity. Count Julien's performance is very wonderful.

We met only Mrs. Latouche and Miss East, and we are just now engaged to spend next Sunday evening at Mrs. L.'s, and to meet the D'Entraigues, but M. le Comte must do without Henry. If he would but speak English, *I* would take to him.

Have you ever mentioned the leaving off tea to Mrs. K.? Eliza has just spoken of it again. The benefit *she* has found from it in sleeping has been very great.

I shall write soon to Catherine to fix my day, which will be Thursday. We have no engagement but for Sunday. Eliza's cold makes quiet advisable. Her party is mentioned in this morning's paper. I am sorry to hear of poor Fanny's state. From *that* quarter, I suppose, is to be the alloy of her happiness. I *will* have no more to say.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

Give my love particularly to my goddaughter.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

LVII.

Sloane St.: Tuesday.

My dear Cassandra,

I had sent off my letter yesterday before yours came, which I was sorry for; but as Eliza has been so good as to get me a frank, your questions shall be answered without much further expense to you.

The best direction to Henry at Oxford will be *The Blue Boar, Cornmarket.*

I do *not* mean to provide another trimming for my pelisse, for I am determined to spend no more money; so I shall wear it as it is, longer than I ought, and then—I do not know.

My head-dress was a bugle-band like the border to my gown, and a flower of Mrs. Tilson's. I depended upon hearing something of the evening from Mr. W. K., and am very well satisfied with his notice of me—'A pleasing-looking young woman'—that must do; one cannot pretend to anything better now; thankful to have it continued a few years longer!

It gives me sincere pleasure to hear of Mrs. Knight's having had a tolerable night at last, but upon this occasion I wish she had another name, for the two *nights* jingle very much.

We have tried to get 'Self-control,' but in vain. I *should* like to know what her estimate is, but am always half afraid of finding a clever novel *too clever*, and of finding my own story and my own people all forestalled.

Eliza has just received a few lines from Henry to assure her of the good conduct of his mare. He slept at Uxbridge on Sunday, and wrote from Wheatfield.

We were not claimed by Hans Place yesterday, but are to dine there to-day. Mr. Tilson called in the evening, but otherwise we were quite alone all day; and, after having been out a good deal, the change was very pleasant.

I like your opinion of Miss Atten much better than I expected, and have now hopes of her staying a whole twelvemonth. By this time I suppose she is hard at it, governing away. Poor creature! I pity her, though they *are* my nieces.

Oh! yes, I remember Miss Emma Plumbtree's *local* consequence perfectly.

> I am in a dilemma, for want of an Emma,
> Escaped from the lips of Henry Gipps.

But, really, I was never much more put to it than in continuing an answer to Fanny's former message. What is there to be said on the subject?

Pery pell, or pare pey? or po; or at the most, Pi, pope, pey, pike, pit.

I congratulate Edward on the Weald of Kent Canal Bill being put off till another Session, as I have just had the pleasure of reading. There is always something to be hoped from delay.

> Between Session and Session
> The first Prepossession
> May rouse up the Nation,
> And the villainous Bill
> May be forced to lie still
> Against wicked men's will.

There is poetry for Edward and his daughter. I am afraid I shall not have any for you.

I forgot to tell you in my last that our cousin, Miss Payne, called in on Saturday, and was persuaded to stay dinner. She told us a great deal about her friend Lady Cath. Brecknell, who is most happily married, and Mr. Brecknell is very religious, and has got black whiskers.

I am glad to think that Edward has a tolerable day for his drive to Goodnestone, and *very* glad to hear of his kind promise of bringing you to town. I hope everything will arrange itself favourably. The 16th is now to be Mrs. Dundas's day.

I mean, if I can, to wait for your return before I have my new gown made up, from a notion

of their making up to more advantage together; and, as I find the muslin is not so wide as it *used to be*, some contrivance may be necessary. I expect the skirt to require one-half breadth cut in gores, besides two whole breadths.

Eliza has not yet quite resolved on inviting Anna, but I think she will.

Yours very affectionately, JANE.

LVIII.

Chawton: Wednesday (May 29).

It was a mistake of mine, my dear Cassandra, to talk of a tenth child at Hamstall. I had forgot there were but eight already.

Your enquiry after my uncle and aunt were most happily timed, for the very same post brought an account of them. They are again at Gloucester House enjoying fresh air, which they seem to have felt the want of in Bath, and are tolerably well, but not more than tolerable. My aunt does not enter into particulars, but she does not write in spirits, and we imagine that she has never entirely got the better of her disorder in the winter. Mrs. Welby takes her out airing in her barouche, which gives her a headache—a comfortable proof, I sup-

pose, of the uselessness of the new carriage when they have got it.

You certainly must have heard before I can tell you that Col. Orde has married our cousin, Margt. Beckford, the Marchess. of Douglas's sister. The papers say that her father disinherits her, but I think too well of an Orde to suppose that she has not a handsome independence of her own.

The chicken are all alive and fit for the table, but we save them for something grand. Some of the flower seeds are coming up very well, but your mignonette makes a wretched appearance. Miss Benn has been equally unlucky as to hers. She had seed from four different people, and none of it comes up. Our young piony at the foot of the fir-tree has just blown and looks very handsome, and the whole of the shrubbery border will soon be very gay with pinks and sweet-williams, in addition to the columbines already in bloom. The syringas, too, are coming out. We are likely to have a great crop of Orleans plumbs, but not many greengages—on the standard scarcely any, three or four dozen, perhaps, against the wall. I believe I told you differently when I first came home, but I can now judge better than I could then.

I have had a medley and satisfactory letter this morning from the husband and wife at Cowes; and, in consequence of what is related of their plans, we have been talking over the possibility of inviting them here in their way from Steventon, which is what one should wish to do, and is, I daresay, what they expect; but, supposing Martha to be at home, it does not seem a very easy thing to accommodate so large a party. My mother offers to give up her room to Frank and Mary, but there will then be only the best for two maids and three children.

They go to Steventon about the 22nd, and I guess—for it is quite a guess—will stay there from a fortnight to three weeks.

I must not venture to press Miss Sharpe's coming at present; we may hardly be at liberty before August.

Poor John Bridges! we are very sorry for his situation and for the distress of the family. Lady B. is in one way severely tried. And our own dear brother suffers a great deal, I dare say, on the occasion.

I have not much to say of ourselves. Anna is nursing a cold caught in the arbour at Faringdon, that she may be able to keep her engagement to

Maria M. this evening, when I suppose she will make it worse.

She did not return from Faringdon till Sunday, when H. B. walked home with her, and drank tea here. She was with the Prowtings almost all Monday. She went to learn to make feather trimmings of Miss Anna, and they kept her to dinner, which was rather lucky, as we were called upon to meet Mrs. and Miss Terry the same evening at the Digweeds ; and, though Anna was of course invited too, I think it always safest to keep her away from the family lest she should be doing too little or too much.

Mrs. Terry, Mary, and Robert, with my aunt Harding and her daughter, came from Dummer for a day and a night—all very agreeable and very much delighted with the new house and with Chawton in general.

We sat upstairs and had thunder and lightning as usual. I never knew such a spring for thunderstorms as it has been. Thank God! we have had no bad ones here. I thought myself in luck to have my uncomfortable feelings shared by the mistress of the house, as that procured blinds and candles. It had been excessively hot the whole day. Mrs. Harding is a good-looking woman, but

not much like Mrs. Toke, inasmuch as she is very brown and has scarcely any teeth ; she seems to have some of Mrs. Toke's civility. Miss H. is an elegant, pleasing, pretty-looking girl, about nineteen, I suppose, or nineteen and a half, or nineteen and a quarter, with flowers in her head and music at her finger ends. She plays very well indeed. I have seldom heard anybody with more pleasure. They were at Godington four or five years ago. My cousin, Flora Long, was there last year.

My name is Diana. How does Fanny like it ? What a change in the weather ! We have a fire again now.

Harriet Benn sleeps at the Great House to-night and spends to-morrow with us ; and the plan is that we should all walk with her to drink tea at Faringdon, for her mother is now recovered, but the state of the weather is not very promising at present.

Miss Benn has been returned to her cottage since the beginning of last week, and has now just got another girl; she comes from Alton. For many days Miss B. had nobody with her but her niece Elizabeth, who was delighted to be her visitor and her maid. They both dined here on Saturday while Anna was at Faringdon ; and last night an

accidental meeting and a sudden impulse produced Miss Benn and Maria Middleton at our tea-table.

If you have not heard it is very fit you should, that Mr. Harrison has had the living of Fareham given him by the Bishop, and is going to reside there; and now it is said that Mr. Peach (beautifu wiseacre) wants to have the curacy of Overton, and, if he *does* leave Wootton, James Digweed wishes to go there. Fare you well.

Yours affectionately, JANE AUSTEN.

The chimneys at the Great House are done. Mr. Prowting has opened a gravel pit, very conveniently for my mother, just at the mouth of the approach to his house; but it looks a little as if he meant to catch all his company. Tolerable gravel.

Miss Austen, Godmersham Park,
Faversham, Kent.

LIX.

Chawton: Friday (May 31)

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

I have a magnificent project. The Cookes have put off their visit to us; they are not well enough to leave home at present, and we have no chance

of seeing them till I do not know when—probably never, in this house.

This circumstance has made me think the present time would be favourable for Miss Sharpe's coming to us; it seems a more disengaged period with us than we are likely to have later in the summer. If Frank and Mary do come, it can hardly be before the middle of July, which will be allowing a reasonable length of visit for Miss Sharpe, supposing she begins it when you return; and if you and Martha do not dislike the plan, and she can avail herself of it, the opportunity of her being conveyed hither will be excellent.

I shall write to Martha by this post, and if neither you nor she make any objection to my proposal, I shall make the invitation directly, and as there is no time to lose, you must write by return of post if you have any reason for not wishing it done. It was her intention, I believe, to go first to Mrs. Lloyd, but such a means of getting here may influence her otherwise.

We have had a thunder-storm again this morning. Your letter came to comfort me for it.

I have taken your hint, slight as it was, and have written to Mrs. Knight, and most sincerely do I hope it will not be in vain. I cannot endure the

idea of her giving away her own wheel, and have told her no more than the truth, in saying that I could never use it with comfort. I had a great mind to add that, if she persisted in giving it, I would spin nothing with it but a rope to hang myself, but I was afraid of making it appear a less serious matter of feeling than it really is.

I am glad you are so well yourself, and wish everybody else were equally so. I will not say that your mulberry-trees are dead, but I am afraid they are not alive. We shall have pease soon. I mean to have them with a couple of ducks from Wood Barn, and Maria Middleton, towards the end of next week.

From Monday to Wednesday Anna is to be engaged at Faringdon, in order that she may come in for the gaieties of Tuesday (the 4th), on Selbourne Common, where there are to be volunteers and felicities of all kinds. Harriet B. is invited to spend the day with the John Whites, and her father and mother have very kindly undertaken to get Anna invited also.

Harriot and Eliza dined here yesterday, and we walked back with them to tea. Not my mother—she has a cold which affects her in the usual way, and was not equal to the walk. She is better this

morning, and I hope will soon physick away the worst part of it. It has not confined her; she has got out every day that the weather has allowed her.

Poor Anna is also suffering from *her* cold, which is worse to-day, but as she has no sore throat I hope it may spend itself by Tuesday. She had a delightful evening with the Miss Middletons—syllabub, tea, coffee, singing, dancing, a hot supper, eleven o'clock, everything that can be imagined agreeable. She desires her best love to Fanny, and will answer her letter before she leaves Chawton, and engages to send her a particular account of the Selbourne day.

We cannot agree as to which is the eldest of the two Miss Plumbtrees; send us word. Have you remembered to collect pieces for the patch-work? We are now at a stand-still. I got up here to look for the old map, and can now tell you that it shall be sent to-morrow; it was among the great parcel in the dining-room. As to my debt of 3*s.* 6*d.* to Edward, I must trouble you to pay it when you settle with him for your boots.

We began our China tea three days ago, and I find it very good. My companions know nothing of the matter. As to Fanny and her twelve pounds

in a twelvemonth, she may talk till she is as black in the face as her own tea, but I cannot believe her—more likely twelve pounds to a quarter.

I have a message to you from Mrs. Cooke. The substance of it is that she hopes you will take Bookham in your way home and stay there as long as you can, and that when you must leave them they will convey you to Guildford. You may be sure that it is very kindly worded, and that there is no want of attendant compliments to my brother and his family.

I am very sorry for Mary, but I have some comfort in there being two curates now lodging in Bookham, besides their own Mr. Waineford from Dorking, so that I think she must fall in love with one or the other.

How horrible it is to have so many people killed! And what a blessing that one cares for none of them!

I return to my letter-writing from calling on Miss Harriot Webb, who is short and not quite straight, and cannot pronounce an R any better than her sisters; but she has dark hair, a complexion to suit, and, I think, has the pleasantest countenance and manner of the three—the most natural. She appears very well pleased with her

new home, and they are all reading with delight Mrs. H. More's recent publication.

You cannot imagine—it is not in human nature to imagine—what a nice walk we have round the orchard. The row of beech look very well indeed, and so does the young quickset hedge in the garden. I hear to-day that an apricot has been detected on one of the trees. My mother is perfectly convinced *now* that she shall not be overpowered by her cleftwood, and I believe would rather have more than less.

Strange to tell, Mr. Prowting was *not* at Miss Lee's wedding, but his daughters had some cake, and Anna had her share of it.

I continue to like our old cook quite as well as ever, and, but that I am afraid to write in her praise, I could say that she seems just the servant for us. Her cookery is at least tolerable; her pastry is the only deficiency.

God bless you, and I hope June will find you well, and bring us together.

Yours ever, JANE.

I hope you understand that I do not expect you to write on Sunday if you like my plan. I shall consider silence as consent.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

LX.

Chawton: Thursday (June 6).

By this time, my dearest Cassandra, you know Martha's plans. I was rather disappointed, I confess, to find that she could not leave town till after ye 24th, as I had hoped to see you here the week before. The delay, however, is not great, and everything seems generally arranging itself for your return very comfortably.

I found Henry perfectly pre-disposed to bring you to London if agreeable to yourself; he has not fixed his day for *going* into Kent, but he must be back again before ye 20th. You may, therefore, think with something like certainty of the close of your Godmersham visit, and will have, I suppose, about a week for Sloane Street. He travels in his gig, and should the weather be tolerable I think you must have a delightful journey.

I have given up all idea of Miss Sharpe's travelling with you and Martha, for though you are both all compliance with my scheme, yet as *you* knock off a week from the end of her visit, and *Martha* rather more from the beginning, the thing is out of the question.

I have written to her to say that after the middle of July we shall be happy to receive her, and I have added a welcome if she could make her way hither *directly*, but I do not expect that she will. I have also sent our invitation to Cowes.

We are very sorry for the disappointment you have all had in Lady B.'s illness; but a division of the proposed party is with you by this time, and I hope may have brought you a better account of the rest.

Give my love and thanks to Harriot, who has written me charming things of your looks, and diverted me very much by poor Mrs. C. Milles's continued perplexity.

I had a few lines from Henry on Tuesday to prepare us for himself and his friend, and by the time that I had made the sumptuous provision of a neck of mutton on the occasion, they drove into the court; but lest you should not immediately recollect in how many hours a neck of mutton may be certainly procured, I add that they came a little after twelve—both tall and well, and in their different degrees agreeable.

It was a visit of only twenty-four hours, but very pleasant while it lasted. Mr. Tilson took a

sketch of the Great House before dinner, and after dinner we all three walked to Chawton Park,[1] meaning to go into it, but it was too dirty, and we were obliged to keep on the outside. Mr. Tilson admired the trees very much, but grieved that they should not be turned into money.

My mother's cold is better, and I believe she only wants dry weather to be very well. It was a great distress to her that Anna should be absent during her uncle's visit, a distress which I could not share. She does not return from Faringdon till this evening, and I doubt not has had plenty of the miscellaneous, unsettled-sort of happiness which seems to suit her best. We hear from Miss Benn, who was on the Common with the Prowtings, that she was very much admired by the gentlemen in general.

I like your new bonnets exceedingly; yours is a shape which always looks well, and I think Fanny's particularly becoming to her.

On Monday I had the pleasure of receiving, unpacking, and approving our Wedgwood ware. It all came very safely, and upon the whole is a

[1] A large beech wood extending for a long distance upon a hill about a mile from Chawton: the trees are magnificent.

good match, though I think they might have allowed us rather larger leaves, especially in such a year of fine foliage as this. One is apt to suppose that the woods about Birmingham must be blighted. There was no bill with the goods, but that shall not screen them from being paid. I mean to ask Martha to settle the account. It will be quite in her way, for she is just now sending my mother a breakfast set from the same place.

I hope it will come by the waggon to-morrow; it is certainly what we want, and I long to know what it is like, and as I am sure Martha has great pleasure in making the present, I will not have any regret. We have considerable dealings with the waggons at present: a hamper of port and brandy from Southampton is now in the kitchen.

Your answer about the Miss Plumbtrees proves you as fine a Daniel as ever Portia was; for I maintained Emma to be the eldest.

We began pease on Sunday, but our gatherings are very small, not at all like the gathering in the 'Lady of the Lake.' Yesterday I had the agreeable surprise of finding several scarlet strawberries quite ripe; had *you* been at home, this would have been a pleasure lost. There are more

gooseberries and fewer currants than I thought at first. We must buy currants for our wine.

The Digweeds are gone down to see the Stephen Terrys at Southampton, and catch the King's birthday at Portsmouth. Miss Papillon called on us yesterday, looking handsomer than ever. Maria Middleton and Miss Benn dine here to-morrow.

We are not to enclose any more letters to Abingdon Street, as perhaps Martha has told you.

I had just left off writing and put on my things for walking to Alton, when Anna and her friend Harriot called in their way thither, so we went together. Their business was to provide mourning against the King's death, and my mother has had a bombasin bought for her. I am not sorry to be back again, for the young ladies had a great deal to do, and without much method in doing it.

Anna does not come home till to-morrow morning. She has written I find to Fanny, but there does not seem to be a great deal to relate of Tuesday. I had hoped there might be dancing.

Mrs. Budd died on Sunday evening. I saw her two days before her death, and thought it must happen soon. She suffered much from weakness and restlessness almost to the last.

Poor little Harriot seems truly grieved. You have never mentioned Harry; how is he?

With love to you all,

Yours affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

1813

The eleventh division of the letters includes those written during that which I believe to have been Jane Austen's last visit to Godmersham. With regard to most of these later letters, I have derived much assistance from my mother's old pocket-books, in which she regularly kept her diary from the time she was eleven years old until she was unable to write. During the earlier years there are only casual entries relating to Aunt Jane. As, for instance: 'June 18, 1807.—Papa brought me a packet from Southampton containing a letter from Aunt Cassandra, and a note and long strip of beautiful work as a present from Aunt Jane.' Then in September of the same year the visit of 'grandmamma and Aunts Cassandra and Jane Austen' to Chawton House is duly chronicled, and in 1808

'Aunt Jane's' stay at Godmersham for a week, accompanied by her brother James and his wife. There is also an interesting entry of the date of September 28, 1811: 'Letter from At. Cass. to beg we would not mention that Aunt Jane wrote Sense and Sensibility.' But, although many passages both in our letters and the pocket-books evince the affection which from a very early period existed between the aunt and the niece, the time when that affection seems to have ripened into more intimate friendship was in 1812, during a visit which my mother, in company with her father and cousin, 'Fanny Cage' (afterwards Lady Bridges), paid to Chawton Great House in that year. They arrived there on April 14, and stayed until May 7, when they returned to Kent, paying Oxford a visit on their way. My mother had at this time just completed her nineteenth year, and she and her aunt seem to have been much together during this visit. Unfortunately I have no letters bearing the date of this particular year; probably because the sisters were more than usually together at Chawton Cottage; but during the next three years I am able, by a comparison of the letters and the pocket-books, to

trace Jane's movements with greater ease, and in somewhat more of detail.

And here there comes to me a great source of grief—namely, that although I have five letters addressed by 'Aunt Jane' to my mother during the years 1814-16, the pocket-books show the receipt in those same years of upwards of *thirty* letters from the same aunt, which would be invaluable for our present purpose, but which I fear must have been destroyed, with the exception of those which I have already found, and now publish.

Miss Knight, the 'Marianne' of our letters, known to and loved by all *my* generation of the family as 'Aunt May,' who succeeded my mother in the management of the Godmersham household, and reigned there, to her own happiness and that of everybody about her, until my grandfather's death, thus writes of the intimacy between her sister and aunt:—

'Your dear mother, being so many years older than the rest of us, was a friend and companion of the two aunts, Cassandra and Jane, particularly of the latter, and they had all sorts of secrets together, whilst we were only children.' That this was

the case is abundantly shown by the five letters above mentioned; from which we shall see that the aunt and niece opened their hearts to each other, and wrote in the most unreserved manner. The pocket-books of 1812 chronicle many 'walks with Aunt Jane' during that month at Chawton, but none of the 'secrets' are told, nor is there anything which illustrates the life of our heroine, if I may apply such a term to one who would have been amused beyond measure at the idea of its application to herself.

The ten letters of 1813 were written—the first from Sloane Street, in May, the next two from Henrietta Street (to which locality her brother Henry had moved from Sloane Street), in September, and the seven following from Kent, and are all addressed to her sister at Chawton. In that year Godmersham required painting, and the family moved off to Chawton in April, and stayed there for six months, during which time the friendship between the aunt and niece grew and increased, as the entries in the pocket-books prove to demonstration.

June 6th.—'Aunt Jane and I had a very interesting conversation.'

June 22nd.—'Aunt Jane and I had a delicious morning together.'

June 23rd.—'Aunt Jane and I walked to Alton together.'

July —.—'Had leeches on for headache. Aunt Jane came and sat with me.'

August 1st.—'Spent the evening with Aunt Jane.'

But, in fact, the whole diary is a continuous record of meetings between the relations; every day it is either 'the Cottage dined here' or 'we dined at the Cottage,' 'Aunt Jane drank tea with us,' &c. &c. The first letter of this series was written whilst Jane was on a visit to her brother Henry, with whom she returned to Chawton on June 1. It contains some interesting allusions to 'Pride and Prejudice,' from which we may gather that the authoress had an ideal 'Jane' (Mrs. Bingley) and 'Elizabeth' (Mrs. Darcy), and that she succeeded in finding a satisfactory likeness of the first, but not of the second, in the picture galleries which she visited. I am not much surprised at this circumstance, for with all her beauty and sweetness, Jane Bingley is a less uncommon character than her sister Elizabeth, upon whom

the authoress had exerted all her power, and was proportionately attached to this most successful creation of her brain. The special message to 'Fanny' upon this point reminds me of another entry in this year's diary: 'We finished "Pride and Prejudice."' I have often heard my mother speak of 'Aunt Jane's' reading some of her own works aloud to her; perhaps this refers to one of the occasions on which she did so. How delightful it must have been to hear those life-like characters described by the lips of the very person who had called them into existence!

It will be seen from another paragraph in this letter that my mother had written her aunt a letter in the character of 'Miss Darcy,' which made her 'laugh heartily.' It was their habit to talk over the characters of Aunt Jane's books together, and if I only had it in my power to add some of their conversations to these letters I have no doubt that they would prove highly interesting to my readers. Jane returned with the Godmersham family to Kent early in September, and her letters from Henrietta Street were written during the short stay which the party made with Henry Austen on their homeward journey. I am able to

fix the dates by the pocket-books. On Tuesday, September 14, my mother writes: 'Papa and Aunt Jane, Lizzie, Marianne, and I left Chawton at nine, and got to Uncle Henry Austen's house in Henrietta Street in good time.' The letters of the 14th and 16th tell the story of their doings, which the diary summarises pretty accurately: 'We shopped all day; a complete bustle' on the 15th; and on the 16th: 'We called on Mrs. Tilson, and were all *Spenced*,' Spence being the individual who was apparently entrusted with the superintendence of the teeth of the Godmersham family. The allusions in the letter to the visit to Covent Garden are also corroborated by entries in the pocket-book, which prove the amusement which was derived by the younger members of the party as well as by their aunt. The Mr. Tilson mentioned in the London letters was one of Henry Austen's partners in the bank.

'Miss Clewes,' after whom Jane inquires, was governess at Godmersham, whom my mother had engaged for her younger sisters, and whom she describes in her diary as 'a treasure.' She had been preceded by Miss Sharpe, who was my mother's own governess, and is often mentioned in

these letters. Miss Clewes lived nearly eight years at Godmersham. The diary continues, under date of Friday, the 17th: 'We left town at eight, and reached dear Godmersham before six.'

During the next two months Jane remained in Kent, and here again the comparison with the pocket-books enables me to make out the allusions in the letters. 'Her sister in Lucina, Mrs. H. Gipps' (Letter 64), was, before her marriage, 'Emma Plumptre,' whose sister, 'Mary P.,' was a great friend of my mother's; her other two chief friends being 'Mary Oxenden,' daughter of Sir Henry Oxenden, of Broome, afterwards Mrs. Hammond, and 'Fanny Cage,' of all three of whom we find frequent mention in the letters. The 'Mr. K.s' who 'came a little before dinner on Monday' were Messrs. Wyndham and Charles Knatchbull, the first and second sons of my grandfather, Sir Edward Knatchbull, by his second wife, Frances Graham, and 'their lovely Wadham' was their cousin, son of Wyndham Knatchbull, of London, and afterwards the owner (on his brother William's death) of Babington, in Somersetshire. Wyndham Knatchbull was twenty-seven in 1813, as he was born in 1786. He was afterwards the Rev. Dr.

Knatchbull, Rector of Smeeth-cum-Aldington, and died in 1868, at the age of eighty-two.

'We hear a great deal about George Hatton's wretchedness.' I remember hearing from my mother that the gentleman here referred to had 'a great disappointment' in early life, but who the lady was or whether this was the 'wretchedness' I cannot say. Perhaps it had nothing to do with love, and was only caused by the death of his great-aunt, Lady Charlotte Finch (*née* Fermor), who died in June 1813. But I am bound to say that I have a letter before me which says, 'all the young ladies were in love with George Hatton—he was very handsome and agreeable, danced very well, and flirted famously.' At any rate, Aunt Jane rightly surmised that his 'quick feelings' would not kill him, for he lived to be Earl of Winchilsea, and to marry three times, his last wife being Fanny Margaretta, eldest daughter of Mr. Rice, of Dane Court, and the 'Lizzie' of our letters. He died in 1858, and those who in later life knew the warm-hearted generosity of his nature, the sterling worth of his character and excellence of his disposition, will not be surprised to hear of that general popularity in youth which he undoubtedly enjoyed. I

may mention with regard to the letter now before us, that he got over his 'wretchedness' in due time, for early in the following June my mother's diary records: 'The intended marriage of George Hatton and Lady Charlotte Graham announced,' which duly took place on July 26, and on the 30th the entry occurs 'saw the bride and bridegroom pass to Eastwell in proper state!' I ought perhaps to add the entry of August 7, which is to this effect: 'George Hatton and bride called; Lady Charlotte is a sweet little perfection.'

'The Sherers' were the Rector of Godmersham and his wife. Mr. Sherer is often mentioned in my mother's diary, and seems to have been much liked. He died in 1825.

Evington, where 'the gentlemen' all dined one night, was and is the seat of the Honywood family, in the parish of Elmsted, some miles the other side of Wye from Godmersham. The Lady Honywood mentioned in these letters was the wife of Sir John Courtenay Honywood, and daughter of the Rev. Sir William Henry Cooper, Bart. The commendations which Jane bestows upon her in a later letter (No. 70) were well deserved, for even within my memory she was a graceful and charm-

ing woman, and must have been beautiful in her youth. I have always heard her spoken of as one of the most delightful people, and believe that she fully deserved the description.

I cannot unravel the 'Adlestrop Living business' at this distance of time, but it was a Leigh Living. The Rev. Thos. Leigh, younger son of William Leigh, of Adlestrop (who was eldest brother of Thomas Leigh, Rector of Harpsden, Henley-on-Thames, Mrs. George Austen's father), held this living in 1806, and in that year succeeded to Stoneleigh under a peculiar limitation in the will of Edward, fifth Lord Leigh, on the death of the latter's sister Mary. Mr. Leigh Perrot, his first cousin, claimed to be next in remainder, but sold his claim, and James Henry, son of James, eldest brother of the Rev. Thomas of Adlestrop, and grandfather of the present Lord Leigh, succeeded. I have no other clue to the matter, which is not of much importance, and has little to do with Jane Austen.

The 'Sackree' of whom such frequent mention is made in the letters from Godmersham was the old nurse of my grandfather's children, an excellent woman and a great favourite. I remember

some of her stories to this day, especially one of a country girl who, on being engaged by the housekeeper of a certain family, inquired if she might 'sleep round.' 'Sleep round?' was the reply. 'Yes, of course; you may sleep round or square, whichever you please, for what *I* care!' However, after the lapse of a few days, the girl having been kept up for some work or other till ten o'clock, did not appear in the morning. After some delay, the housekeeper, fancying she must be ill, went up to her room about nine o'clock, and finding her fast asleep and snoring soundly, promptly woke her up, and began to scold her for an idle baggage. On this, the girl with an injured air, began to remonstrate, 'Why ma'am, you told me yourself I might *sleep round*, and as I wasn't in bed till ten o'clock last night, I a'nt a coming down till *ten this morning*.' Mrs. Sackree went by the familiar name of 'Caky,' the origin of which I have been unable to trace, but which was perhaps given to her in the Godmersham nursery by the little ones, who were doing their best to pronounce her real name. She lived on at Godmersham, saw and played with many of the children of her nurslings, and died in March 1851 in

her ninetieth year. Mrs. Sayce was her niece, and my mother's lady's-maid, of whom I know no more than that she occupied that honourable position for twelve years, married a German in 1822, and died at Stuttgard in 1844. Sackree succeeded her as housekeeper when she left Godmersham.

I have no further record of Jane's proceedings in September, save an entry of my mother's that 'Aunt Jane and I paid poor visits together,' and another that they 'called on the Reynolds' at Bilting,' which was a house belonging to the Godmersham property, about a mile from Godmersham, of which I suppose a family of that name were the tenants in 1813. I do not know who the Dr. Isham was who was so good as to say that he was 'sure that he should not like Madame D'Arblay's new novel half so well' as 'Pride and Prejudice,' but I imagine that the vast majority of the readers of both books would have agreed with him; for the new novel referred to was 'The Wanderer,' of which I have already hinted my opinion that the falling off from the previous works of the fair authoress is so very manifest that it is difficult to suppose that it was written by the same hand to

which we are indebted for 'Evelina,' 'Cecilia' and 'Camilla.'

Mr. J. P. is Mr. John Pemberton Plumptre, grandson of the John Plumptre who married Margaretta Bridges in 1750. His father married a Pemberton, whence his second Christian name, and he himself married in 1818 Catherine Matilda Methuen, daughter of Paul Cobb Methuen, of Corsham House, Wilts; but, having only three daughters, Fredville came, on his decease in 1864, to Charles John, the son of his brother Charles. Mr. Plumptre represented East Kent for twenty years, from 1832 to 1852, having been returned as 'an unflinching Reformer,' but afterwards seeing reason to ally himself with the Conservative party. This caused much anger among his former political friends, and was the occasion of some amusing election squibs, one of which I remember. It was written in 1837, when Mr. Rider, whose property was in West Kent, contested Mr. Plumptre's seat in the Liberal interest. The squib was a parody on the song, 'Oh where, and oh where, is your Highland Laddie gone?' the words 'Jockey Rider' being substituted throughout for 'Highland Laddie'; and the verse, 'In what clothes, in

what clothes, is your Highland Laddie clad?' was thus transformed—blue, it should be observed, being the Liberal colour in East Kent:—

> In what clothes, in what clothes, is your Jockey Rider clad?
>
> He's clad all o'er in Blue—but that Blue is *very bad*;
> For it's all *second-hand, being what J. P. Plumptre had!*

'Norton Court' was the residence of the Mr. Lushington who came to Godmersham during this visit of Jane's, and who was afterwards, as the Right Hon. Stephen Rumbold Lushington, for some years Patronage Secretary of the Treasury, sat in several Parliaments for Canterbury, afterwards served as Governor of Madras, married the daughter of Lord Harris, and died at Norton Court in 1868, in his ninety-fourth year. He was a pleasant and agreeable man of the world, and I am not surprised to find that he made a favourable impression upon Jane. The most amusing thing I remember to tell about him is in connection with the celebrated East Kent election in 1852, when Sir E. Dering and Sir B. Bridges did battle for the seat vacated by Mr. Plumptre, and the latter won. Soon after the contest I had a long talk with Mr. Lushington, who had very warmly espoused Sir E.

Dering's cause, and who loudly declared that his defeat had been in a great measure owing to illegal expenditure on the part of Sir Brook, which he vehemently denounced, and expressed himself very strongly in favour of purity of election and as a hater of bribery of any sort. Presently, however, our conversation drifted into a talk about old times, and the days when he was Secretary of the Treasury before the Reform Bill of 1832. We talked of the Dering family, of their Borough of New Romney, which used to return two members, and of the present Sir Edward Dering's uncle, who managed the Surrenden estates during his long minority. Upon this subject our lover of purity of election waxed wroth. 'A confounded old screw he was!' he exclaimed. 'I was always ready, on the part of the Government, to give him a thousand for the seats, but the old fellow always insisted upon *two thousand guineas*, and I had to give him his price!' Whatever his views, however, upon such matters, he was certainly a favourite with the ladies, his musical talents being one of his recommendations, for I find an entry in my mother's pocket-book of one year: 'Mr. Lushington sang. He has a lovely voice, and

is quite delightful.' I gather from a similar source that he was generous with his 'franks,' another way to ladies' hearts of which unfortunate M.P.'s have been deprived by the progress of modern improvements. Mystole, to which allusion is made in the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth letters, was, and is, the seat of the old Kentish family of Fagge. At the present moment it is let to Colonel Laurie, lately M.P. for Canterbury, but at the date of our letters it was occupied by the Rev. Sir John Fagge, rector of Chartham (in which parish Mystole is situate), who had, as the letters show, a wife (Miss Newman, of Canterbury, who survived her husband thirty-five years, and died in 1857), four sons and five daughters, all of the latter of whom Jane seems to have been lucky enough to find at home upon the occasion of her visit.

The Mr. Wigram who is introduced as the friend of Edward Bridges would have been mentioned more favourably by Jane if she had known him longer and better. I only knew him as a man somewhat advanced in years, who lived in Grosvenor Square, where I have had the honour of dining with him more than once. But, undoubtedly, he was a most kind-hearted and good

man, a warm friend, of a generous and benevolent disposition, and quite agreeable enough to justify his parents in having called him Henry (see Letter 66).

'The good old original Brett and Toke' (Letter 66) refers to the heads of two very old Kentish families. 'Spring Grove' is about half-a-mile from 'Wye,' and was built in 1674, although Bretts had been buried in Wye some 150 years before. Mr. Toke was the owner of Godinton, near Ashford, which was and is a beautiful and interesting old house, standing in a pleasant and well-timbered park, which lies between the town of Ashford and the adjoining property of Hothfield Park, the seat of the Tufton family, the head of which is now Lord Hothfield. Hasted gives a somewhat lengthy description of the house at Godinton, and tells us that 'in the hall there is a series of fine family portraits, several of which are by Cornelius Johnson. The staircase is of very ancient carved-work, in the windows of which are collected all the arms, quarterings, and matches —in painted glass—of the family. The drawing-room upstairs is curiously wainscotted with oak and carved; particularly along the upper part of

it, all round the room, is a representation of the exercise and manœuvres of the ancient militia, with the men habited and accoutred with their arms, in every attitude of marching, exercise, &c., which makes a very droll exhibition of them. There are several handsome chimney-pieces through the house, of Bethersden marble, well carved and ornamented with the arms of the family.' This was the house in which 'the Charles Cages' were staying, which brings me to an account of the two brothers of that name, who were both very cheery and popular visitors at many other houses besides hospitable Godinton.

Edward and Charles Cage were the younger brothers of Lewis, the husband of Fanny Bridges. They were both clergymen and both great sportsmen. Edward married a Welsh lady, who was very worthy but extremely small. My satirical relatives at Godmersham nicknamed her 'Penny Piece,' though I do not exactly know why, and all I can remember of her is that she hated butterflies and was terribly afraid of guns. Her husband was Rector of Eastling and kept harriers. I have been told that he had the names of his hounds upon his spoons and forks, and once observed to a

visitor, 'If the Archbishop of Canterbury were to come here he would think it rather odd to see the names of my hounds upon my spoons and forks,' which was probably true, though in those days bishops might have sometimes seen even more extraordinary things in the houses of their clergy. Mr. E. Cage died in 1835, and his widow in 1848. Charles Cage had the livings of Bensted and Bredgar, and lived at Chrismill, near Milgate, but afterwards removed to Leybourne. He married Miss Graham, sister of Lady Knatchbull and Lady Oxenden, and of Charles Graham, rector of Barham, also referred to in our letters. She was much liked by the Godmersham family. She died in 1847, and he survived her little more than a year. There are many anecdotes of the two Cages, but I only recollect one of Charles—namely, that when one of his nieces was reading to him the 2nd Chapter of the Acts, he stopped her with a sigh at the mention of the 'Elamites,' and on being asked why, replied, 'It does so put me in mind of Brockman and his hounds in Elham Park!' (a noted fox covert in East Kent). I remember that he came to grief in a disagreeable manner during a visit to Hatch, which occurred in my boyish days. In one

of the passages there are two doors precisely alike, one of which opens into a room and the other on to a back staircase. The worthy old gentleman, going along this passage, opened the latter under the impression that it was the former, marched boldly forward as if on level ground, and naturally enough tumbled downstairs. How he escaped serious injury I cannot imagine, but I believe he suffered no material inconvenience from the shock, unpleasant though it must have been.

The sixty-seventh letter possesses now a more melancholy interest to some who will read these pages than when I first discovered it among the rest. It will be seen to be a joint composition, the first part being written by Jane's niece, 'Lizzy,' afterwards Mrs. Rice, of Dane Court, who only died as these pages were being prepared for publication. Few women ever lived who possessed greater power of attracting the love of others, and few have ever been more fondly loved by those who had the good fortune to know her.

Millgate, mentioned in the sixty-ninth letter, was bought by Mr. R. Cage, a barrister, in 1624, and has been in the Cage family ever since; its

present possessor being General (Lewis) Knight, only son of Henry Knight and Sophia Cage.

The Mrs. Harrison mentioned in the sixty-ninth and seventieth letters must have been Mrs. Lefroy's sister, *née* Charlotte Brydges, who had first married Mr. Branfill, and, after his death in 1792 (leaving her with a son and daughter), Mr. John Harrison, of Denne Hill, who died in 1818 without issue. The madness is, of course, a pleasantry of the writer, since neither family was afflicted with more than the ordinary insanity which mankind enjoy, although both had plenty of that ability which sometimes appears like madness to those who do not happen to possess it.

The seventieth letter is the last from Godmersham, and begins by describing a dinner party at Chilham Castle. 'The Bretons' were Dr. Breton and his wife. He was a gentleman little in stature, somewhat odd in appearance, and eccentric in character. He married Mrs. Billington, and had the rectory of Kennington, between Godmersham and Ashford, where he lived and died. My mother chronicles this gathering as 'a better party than usual,' and by 'bits and scraps' of it Jane herself was 'very well entertained.' Then comes an

amusing account of a concert at Canterbury, to which she went, with my mother and Miss Clewes, and where the races of Bridges and Plumptre seem to have come in force from Goodnestone and Fredville, and to have had a pleasant time of it. My mother says of this concert that she had 'an enjoyable *cose* with sweet Mary Plumptre,' which corresponds with the account in the letter. The next letter—for I do not doubt there *was* a 'next' from Godmersham—would probably have given us an account of the Canterbury ball, which was to take place on the following Thursday, but unfortunately it is not forthcoming. All the same, however, the ball *did* take place, for the pocket-book informs me: 'We went to the Canty. Ball; good company, but no dancing; officers idle and scarcity of county Beaux. Sophia (Deedes) and I only danced the 2nd, and her partner was an officer, mine Wm. Hammond; white sarsnet and silver, silver in my hair.'

On Saturday, November 13, Jane left Godmersham, accompanying my grandfather and mother to Wrotham Rectory, on a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Moore, and on the 15th she went on to her brother Henry's house in Henrietta Street.

LXI.

Sloane St.: Monday (May 24).

My dearest Cassandra,

I am very much obliged to you for writing to me. You must have hated it after a worrying morning. Your letter came just in time to save my going to Remnant's, and fit me for Christian's, where I bought Fanny's dimity.

I went the day before (Friday) to Layton's, as I proposed, and got my mother's gown—seven yards at 6*s.* 6*d.* I then walked into No. 10, which is all dirt and confusion, but in a very promising way, and after being present at the opening of a new account, to my great amusement, Henry and I went to the exhibition in Spring Gardens. It is not thought a good collection, but I was very well pleased, particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley, excessively like her.

I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy. Perhaps, however, I may find her in the great exhibition, which we shall go to if we have time. I have no chance of her in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds's paintings, which is now showing in Pall Mall, and which we are also to visit.

Mrs. Bingley's is exactly herself—size, shaped face, features, and sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown, with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favourite colour with her. I dare say Mrs. D. will be in yellow.

Friday was our worst day as to weather. We were out in a very long and very heavy storm of hail, and there had been others before, but I heard no thunder. Saturday was a good deal better; dry and cold.

I gave 2*s.* 6*d.* for the dimity. I do not boast of any bargains, but think both the sarsenet and dimity good of their sort.

I have bought your locket, but was obliged to give 18*s.* for it, which must be rather more than you intended. It is neat and plain, set in gold.

We were to have gone to the Somerset House Exhibition on Saturday, but when I reached Henrietta Street Mr. Hampson was wanted there, and Mr. Tilson and I were obliged to drive about town after him, and by the time we had done it was too late for anything but home. We never found him after all.

I have been interrupted by Mrs. Tilson. Poor

woman! She is in danger of not being able to attend Lady Drummond Smith's party to-night. Miss Burdett was to have taken her, and now Miss Burdett has a cough and will not go. My cousin *Caroline* is her sole dependence.

The events of yesterday were, our going to Belgrave Chapel in the morning, our being prevented by the rain from going to evening service at St. James, Mr. Hampson's calling, Messrs. Barlow and Phillips dining here, and Mr. and Mrs. Tilson's coming in the evening *à l'ordinaire*. *She* drank tea with us both Thursday and Saturday; *he* dined out each day, and on Friday we were with them, and they wish us to go to them to-morrow evening, to meet Miss Burdett, but I do not know how it will end. Henry talks of a drive to Hampstead, which may interfere with it.

I should like to see Miss Burdett very well, but that I am rather frightened by hearing that she wishes to be introduced to *me*. If I *am* a wild beast I cannot help it. It is not my own fault.

There is no change in our plan of leaving London, but we shall not be with you before Tuesday. Henry thinks Monday would appear too early a day. There is no danger of our being induced to stay longer.

I have not quite determined how I shall manage about my clothes; perhaps there may be only my trunk to send by the coach, or there may be a band-box with it. I have taken your gentle hint, and written to Mrs. Hill.

The Hoblyns want us to dine with them, but we have refused. When Henry returns he will be dining out a great deal, I dare say; as he will then be alone, it will be more desirable; he will be more welcome at every table, and every invitation more welcome to him. He will not want either of us again till he is settled in Henrietta Street. This is my present persuasion. And he will not be settled there—really settled—till late in the autumn; 'he will not be come to bide' till after September.

There is a gentleman in treaty for this house. Gentleman himself is in the country, but gentleman's friend came to see it the other day, and seemed pleased on the whole. Gentleman would rather prefer an increased rent to parting with five hundred guineas at once, and if that is the only difficulty it will not be minded. Henry is indifferent as to the which.

Get us the best weather you can for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. We are to go to

Windsor in our way to Henley, which will be a great delight. We shall be leaving Sloane Street about 12, two or three hours after Charles's party have begun their journey. You will miss them, but the comfort of getting back into your own room will be great. And then the tea and sugar!

I fear Miss Clewes is not better, or you would have mentioned it. I shall not write again unless I have any unexpected communication or opportunity to tempt me. I enclose Mr. Herington's bill and receipt.

I am very much obliged to Fanny for her letter; it made me laugh heartily, but I cannot pretend to answer it. Even had I more time, I should not feel at all sure of the sort of letter that Miss D.[1] would write. I hope Miss Benn is got well again, and will have a comfortable dinner with you to-day.

Monday Evening.—We have been both to the exhibition and Sir J. Reynolds's, and I am disappointed, for there was nothing like Mrs. D. at either. I can only imagine that Mr. D. prizes any picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he

[1] Miss Darcy.

would have that sort of feeling—that mixture of love, pride, and delicacy.

Setting aside this disappointment, I had great amusement among the pictures; and the driving about, the carriage being open, was very pleasant. I liked my solitary elegance very much, and was ready to laugh all the time at my being where I was. I could not but feel that I had naturally small right to be parading about London in a barouche.

Henry desires Edward may know that he has just bought three dozen of claret for him (cheap), and ordered it to be sent down to Chawton.

I should not wonder if we got no farther than Reading on Thursday evening, and so reach Steventon only to a reasonable dinner hour the next day; but whatever I may write or you may imagine we know it will be something different. I shall be quiet to-morrow morning; all my business is done, and I shall only call again upon Mrs. Hoblyn, &c.

Love to your much . . . party.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

May 2, 1813. From Sloane St.
Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favour of Messrs. Gray & Vincent.

LXII.

Henrietta St.: Wednesday (Sept. 15, ½ past 8).

Here I am, my dearest Cassandra, seated in the breakfast, dining, sitting-room, beginning with all my might. Fanny will join me as soon as she is dressed and begin her letter.

We had a very good journey, weather and roads excellent; the three first stages for 1*s.* 6*d.*, and our only misadventure the being delayed about a quarter of an hour at Kingston for horses, and being obliged to put up with a pair belonging to a hackney coach and their coachman, which left no room on the barouche box for Lizzy, who was to have gone her last stage there as she did the first; consequently we were all four within, which was a little crowded.

We arrived at a quarter-past four, and were kindly welcomed by the coachman, and then by his master, and then by William, and then by Mrs. Pengird, who all met us before we reached the foot of the stairs. Mde. Bigion was below dressing us a most comfortable dinner of soup, fish, bouillée, partridges, and an apple tart, which we sat down to soon after five, after cleaning and dressing ourselves and feeling that we were most commodiously

disposed of. The little adjoining dressing-room to our apartment makes Fanny and myself very well off indeed, and as we have poor Eliza's[1] bed our space is ample every way.

Sace arrived safely about half-past six. At seven we set off in a coach for the Lyceum; were at home again in about four hours and a half; had soup and wine and water, and then went to our holes.

Edward finds his quarters very snug and quiet. I must get a softer pen. This is harder. I am in agonies. I have not yet seen Mr. Crabbe. Martha's letter is gone to the post.

I am going to write nothing but short sentences. There shall be two full stops in every line. Layton and Shear's *is* Bedford House. We mean to get there before breakfast if it's possible; for we feel more and more how much we have to do and how little time. This house looks very nice. It seems like Sloane Street moved here. I believe Henry is just rid of Sloane Street. Fanny does not come, but I have Edward seated by me beginning a letter, which looks natural.

Henry has been suffering from the pain in the

[1] Eliza, Henry Austen's first wife, who had died in the earlier part of this year.

face which he has been subject to before. He caught cold at Matlock, and since his return has been paying a little for past pleasure. It is nearly removed now, but he looks thin in the face, either from the pain or the fatigues of his tour, which must have been great.

Lady Robert is delighted with P. and P.,[1] and really *was* so, as I understand, before she knew who wrote it, for, of course, she knows now. He told her with as much satisfaction as if it were my wish. He did not tell *me* this, but he told Fanny. And Mr. Hastings! I am quite delighted with what such a man writes about it. Henry sent him the books after his return from Daylesford, but you will hear the letter too.

Let me be rational, and return to my two full stops.

I talked to Henry at the play last night. We were in a private box—Mr. Spencer's—which made it much more pleasant. The box is directly on the stage. One is infinitely less fatigued than in the common way. But Henry's plans are not what one could wish. He does not mean to be at Chawton till the 29th. He must be in town again by Oct. 5. His plan is to get a couple of

[1] 'Pride and Prejudice.'

days of pheasant shooting and then return directly. His wish was to bring you back with him. I have told him your scruples. He wishes you to suit yourself as to time, and if you cannot come till later, will send for you at any time as far as Bagshot. He presumed you would not find difficulty in getting so far. I could not say you would. He proposed your going with him into Oxfordshire. It was his own thought at first. I could not but catch at it for you.

We have talked of it again this morning (for now we have breakfasted), and I am convinced that if you can make it suit in other respects you need not scruple on his account. If you cannot come back with him on the 3rd or 4th, therefore, I do hope you will contrive to go to Adlestrop. By not beginning your absence till about the middle of this month I think you may manage it very well. But you will think all this over. One could wish he had intended to come to you earlier, but it cannot be helped.

I said nothing to him of Mrs. H. and Miss B., that he might not suppose difficulties. Shall not you put *them* into our own room? This seems to me the best plan, and the maid will be most conveniently near.

Oh, dear me! when I shall ever have done. We *did* go to Layton and Shear's before breakfast. Very pretty English poplins at 4*s.* 3*d.*; Irish, ditto at 6*s.*; *more* pretty, certainly—beautiful.

Fanny and the two little girls are gone to take places for to-night at Covent Garden; 'Clandestine Marriage' and 'Midas.' The latter will be a fine show for L. and M.[1] They revelled last night in 'Don Juan,' whom we left in hell at half-past eleven. We had scaramouch and a ghost, and were delighted. I speak of *them; my* delight was very tranquil, and the rest of us were sober-minded. 'Don Juan' was the last of three musical things. 'Five hours at Brighton,' in three acts—of which one was over before we arrived, none the worse—and the 'Beehive,' rather less flat and trumpery.

I have this moment received 5*l.* from kind, beautiful Edward. Fanny has a similar gift. I shall save what I can of it for your better leisure in this place. *My* letter was from Miss Sharpe—nothing particular. A letter from Fanny Cage this morning.

Four o'clock.—We are just come back from doing Mrs. Tickars, Miss Hare, and Mr. Spence.

[1] Lizzie and Marianne.

Mr. Hall is here, and, while Fanny is under his hands, I will try to write a little more.

Miss Hare had some pretty caps, and is to make me one like one of them, only *white* satin instead of blue. It will be white satin and lace, and a little white flower perking out of the left ear, like Harriot Byron's feather. I have allowed her to go as far as 1*l.* 16*s.* My gown is to be trimmed everywhere with white ribbon plaited on somehow or other. She says it will look well. I am not sanguine. They trim with white very much.

I learnt from Mrs. Tickars's young lady, to my high amusement, that the stays now are not made to force the bosom up at all; *that* was a very unbecoming, unnatural fashion. I was really glad to hear that they are not to be so much off the shoulders as they were.

Going to Mr. Spence's was a sad business and cost us many tears; unluckily we were obliged to go a second time before he could do more than just look. We went first at half-past twelve and afterwards at three; papa with us each time; and, alas! we are to go again to-morrow. Lizzy is not finished yet. There have been no teeth taken out, however, nor will be, I believe, but he

finds *hers* in a very bad state, and seems to think particularly ill of their durableness. They have been all cleaned, *hers* filed, and are to be filed again. There is a very sad hole between two of her front teeth.

Thursday Morning, half-past Seven.—Up and dressed and downstairs in order to finish my letter in time for the parcel. At eight I have an appointment with Madame B., who wants to show me something downstairs. At nine we are to set off for Grafton House, and get that over before breakfast. Edward is so kind as to walk there with us. We are to be at Mr. Spence's again at 11·5; from that time shall be driving about I suppose till four o'clock at least. We are, if possible, to call on Mrs. Tilson.

Mr. Hall was very punctual yesterday, and curled me out at a great rate. I thought it looked hideous, and longed for a snug cap instead, but my companions silenced me by their admiration. I had only a bit of velvet round my head. I did not catch cold however. The weather is all in my favour. I have had no pain in my face since I left you.

We had very good places in the box next the stage-box, front and second row; the three old ones

behind of course. I was particularly disappointed at seeing nothing of Mr. Crabbe. I felt sure of him when I saw that the boxes were fitted up with crimson velvet. The new Mr. Terry was Lord Ogleby, and Henry thinks he may do; but there was no acting more than moderate, and I was as much amused by the remembrances connected with 'Midas' as with any part of it. The girls were very much delighted, but still prefer 'Don Juan;' and I must say that I have seen nobody on the stage who has been a more interesting character than that compound of cruelty and lust.

It was not possible for me to get the worsteds yesterday. I heard Edward last night pressing Henry to come to you, and I think Henry engaged to go there after his November collection. Nothing has been done as to S. and S.[1] The books came to hand too late for him to have time for it before he went. Mr. Hastings never *hinted* at Eliza in the smallest degree. Henry knew nothing of Mr. Trimmer's death. I tell you these things that you may not have to ask them over again.

There is a new clerk sent down to Alton, a Mr. Edmund Williams, a young man whom Henry thinks most highly of, and he turns out to be a

[1] 'Sense and Sensibility.'

son of the luckless Williamses of Grosvenor Place.

I long to have you hear Mr. H.'s opinion of P. and P. His admiring my Elizabeth so much is particularly welcome to me.

Instead of saving my superfluous wealth for you to spend, I am going to treat myself with spending it myself. I hope, at least, that I shall find some poplin at Layton and Shear's that will tempt me to buy it. If I do, it shall be sent to Chawton, as half will be for you; for I depend upon your being so kind as to accept it, being the main point. It will be a great pleasure to me. Don't say a word. I only wish you could choose too. I shall send twenty yards.

Now for Bath. Poor F. Cage has suffered a good deal from her accident. The noise of the White Hart was terrible to her. They will keep her quiet, I dare say. *She* is not so much delighted with the place as the rest of the party; probably, as she says herself, from having been less well, but she thinks she should like it better in the season. The streets are very empty now, and the shops not so gay as she expected. They are at No. 1 Henrietta Street, the corner of Laura Place, and have no acquaintance at present but the Bramstons.

Lady Bridges drinks at the Cross Bath, her son at the Hot, and Louisa is going to bathe. Dr. Parry seems to be half starving Mr. Bridges, for he is restricted to much such a diet as James's bread, water and meat, and is never to eat so much of that as he wishes, and he is to walk a great deal—walk till he drops, I believe—gout or no gout. It really is to that purpose. I have not exaggerated.

Charming weather for you and us, and the travellers, and everybody. You will take your walk this afternoon, and . . .

Henrietta St., the autumn of 1813.
Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favour of Mr. Gray.

LXIII.

Henrietta St.: Thursday (Sept. 16, after dinner).

Thank you, my dearest Cassandra, for the nice long letter I sent off this morning. I hope you have had it by this time, and that it has found you all well, and my mother no more in need of leeches. Whether this will be delivered to you by Henry on Saturday evening, or by the postman on Sunday morning, I know not, as he has lately recollected something of an engagement for Satur-

day, which perhaps may delay his visit. He seems determined to come to you soon however.

I hope you will receive the gown to-morrow, and may be able with tolerable honesty to say that you like the colour. It was bought at Grafton House, where, by going very early, we got immediate attendance and went on very comfortably. I only forgot the one particular thing which I had always resolved to buy there—a white silk handkerchief—and was therefore obliged to give six shillings for one at Crook and Besford's; which reminds me to say that the worsteds ought also to be at Chawton to-morrow, and that I shall be very happy to hear they are approved. I had not much time for deliberation.

We are now all four of us young ladies sitting round the circular table in the inner room writing our letters, while the two brothers are having a comfortable coze in the room adjoining. It is to be a quiet evening, much to the satisfaction of four of the six. My eyes are quite tired of dust and lamps

The letter you forwarded from Edward, junr., has been duly received. He has been shooting most prosperously at home, and dining at Chilham Castle and with Mr. Scudamore.

My cap is come home, and I like it very much. Fanny has one also; hers is white sarsenet and lace, of a different shape from mine, more fit for morning carriage wear, which is what it is intended for, and is in shape exceedingly like our own satin and lace of last winter; shaped round the face exactly like it, with pipes and more fulness, and a round crown inserted behind. *My* cap has a peak in front. Large full bows of very narrow ribbon (old twopenny) are the thing. One over the right temple, perhaps, and another at the left ear.

Henry is not quite well. His stomach is rather deranged. You must keep him in rhubarb, and give him plenty of port and water. He caught his cold farther back than I told you; before he got to Matlock, somewhere in his journey from the North, but the ill effects of *that* I hope are nearly gone.

We returned from Grafton House only just in time for breakfast, and had scarcely finished breakfast when the carriage came to the door. From 11 to half-past 3 we were hard at it; we *did* contrive to get to Hans Place for ten minutes. Mrs. T. was as affectionate and pleasing as ever.

After our return Mr. Tilson walked up from

the Compting House and called upon us, and these have been all our visitings.

I have rejoiced more than once that I bought my writing-paper in the country ; we have not had a quarter of an hour to spare.

I enclose the eighteen-pence due to my mother. The rose colour was 6*s.* and the other 4*s.* per yard. There was but two yards and a quarter of the dark slate in the shop, but the man promised to match it and send it off correctly.

Fanny bought her Irish at Newton's in Leicester Square, and I took the opportunity of thinking about your Irish, and seeing one piece of the yard wide at 4*s.*, and it seemed to me very good ; good enough for your purpose. It might at least be worth your while to go there, if you have no other engagements. Fanny is very much pleased with the stockings she has bought of Remmington, silk at 12*s.*, cotton at 4*s.* 3*d.* She thinks them great bargains, but I have not seen them yet, as my hair was dressing when the man and the stockings came.

The poor girls and their teeth ! I have not mentioned them yet, but we were a whole hour at Spence's, and Lizzy's were filed and lamented over again, and poor Marianne had two taken out after

all, the two just beyond the eye teeth, to make room for those in front. When her doom was fixed, Fanny, Lizzy, and I walked into the next room, where we heard each of the two sharp and hasty screams.

The little girls' teeth I can suppose in a critical state, but I think he must be a lover of teeth and money and mischief, to parade about Fanny's. I would not have had him look at mine for a shilling a tooth and double it. It was a disagreeable hour.

We then went to Wedgwood's, where my brother and Fanny chose a dinner set. I believe the pattern is a small lozenge in purple, between lines of narrow gold, and it is to have the crest.

We must have been three-quarters of an hour at Grafton House, Edward sitting by all the time with wonderful patience. There Fanny bought the net for Anna's gown, and a beautiful square veil for herself. The edging there is very cheap. I was tempted by some, and I bought some very nice plaiting lace at 3*s.* 4*d.*

Fanny desires me to tell Martha, with her kind love, that Birchall assured her there was no second set of Hook's Lessons for Beginners, and that, by my advice, she has therefore chosen her a set by

another composer. I thought she would rather have something than not. It costs six shillings.

With love to you all, including Triggs, I remain,

Yours very affectionately, J. Austen.

Henrietta St., autumn of 1813.
Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favour of .

LXIV.

Godmersham Park: Thursday (Sept. 23).

My dearest Cassandra,

Thank you five hundred and forty times for the exquisite piece of workmanship which was brought into the room this morning, while we were at breakfast, with some very inferior works of art in the same way, and which I read with high glee, much delighted with everything it told, whether good or bad. It is so rich in striking intelligence that I hardly know what to reply to first. I believe finery must have it.

I am extremely glad that you like the poplin. I thought it would have my mother's approbation, but was not so confident of yours. Remember that it is a present. Do not refuse me. I am very rich.

Mrs. Clement is very welcome to her little boy, and to my congratulations into the bargain, if ever you think of giving them. I hope she will do well. Her sister in Lucina, Mrs. H. Gipps, does too well, we think. Mary P. wrote on Sunday that she had been three days on the sofa. Sackree does not approve it.

Well, there is some comfort in the Mrs. Hulbart's not coming to you, and I am happy to hear of the honey. I was thinking of it the other day. Let me know when you begin the new tea, and the new white wine. My present elegancies have not yet made me indifferent to such matters. I am still a cat if I see a mouse.

I am glad you like our caps, but Fanny is out of conceit with hers already; she finds that she has been buying a new cap without having a new pattern, which is true enough. She is rather out of luck to like neither her gown nor her cap, but I do not much mind it, because besides that I like them both myself, I consider it as a thing of course at her time of life—one of the sweet taxes of youth to choose in a hurry and make bad bargains.

I wrote to Charles yesterday, and Fanny has had a letter from him to-day, principally to make inquiries about the time of their visit here, to

which mine was an answer beforehand; so he will probably write again soon to fix his week. I am best pleased that Cassy does not go to you.

Now, what have we been doing since I wrote last? The Mr. K.'s[1] came a little before dinner on Monday, and Edward went to the church with the two seniors, but there is no inscription yet drawn up. They are very good-natured you know, and civil, and all that, but are not particularly superfine; however, they ate their dinner and drank their tea, and went away, leaving their lovely Wadham in our arms, and I wish you had seen Fanny and me running backwards and forwards with his breeches from the little chintz to the white room before we went to bed, in the greatest of frights lest he should come upon us before we had done it all. There had been a mistake in the housemaids' preparation, and *they* were gone to bed.

He seems a very harmless sort of young man, nothing to like or dislike in him—goes out shooting or hunting with the two others all the morning, and plays at whist and makes queer faces in the evening.

On Tuesday the carriage was taken to the

[1] Knatchbulls.

painter's; at one time Fanny and I were to have gone in it, chiefly to call on Mrs. C.—Milles and *Moy*[1]—but we found that they were going for a few days to Sandling, and would not be at home; therefore my brother and Fanny went to Eastwell in the chair instead. While they were gone the Nackington Milles's called and left their cards. Nobody at home at Eastwell.

We hear a great deal of Geo. H.'s wretchedness. I suppose he has quick feelings, but I dare say they will not kill him. He is so much out of spirits, however, that his friend John Plumptre is gone over to comfort him, at Mr. Hatton's desire. He called here this morning in his way. A handsome young man certainly, with quiet, gentlemanlike manners. I set him down as sensible rather than brilliant. There is nobody brilliant nowadays. He talks of staying a week at Eastwell, and then comes to Chilham Castle for a day or two, and my brother invited him to come here afterwards, which he seemed very agreeable to.

'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no

[1] Mrs. C. Milles was the mother of Mr. R. Milles of Nackington and Elmham, Norfolk. 'Moy' means 'Molly' Milles—probably an imitation of her mother's way of pronouncing her name. She was sister to Mr. R. Milles, and 'the Nackington Milles'' refers to his widow who lived there after his death.

more,' but to make amends for that, our visit to the Tyldens is over. My brother, Fanny, Edwd., and I went; Geo. stayed at home with W. K. There was nothing entertaining, or out of the common way. We met only Tyldens and double Tyldens. A whist-table for the gentlemen, a grown-up musical young lady to play backgammon with Fanny, and engravings of the Colleges at Cambridge for me. In the morning we returned Mrs. Sherer's visit. I like *Mr.* S. very much.

Well, I have not half done yet, I am not come up with myself. My brother drove Fanny to Nackington and Canty. yesterday, and while they were gone the Faggs paid their duty. Mary Oxenden is staying at Canty. with the Blairs, and Fanny's object was to see her.

The Deedes want us to come to Sandling for a few days, or at least a day and night. At present Edwd. does not seem well affected—he would rather not be asked to go anywhere—but I rather expect he will be persuaded to go for the one day and night.

I read him the chief of your letter; he was interested and pleased, as he ought, and will be happy to hear from you himself. Your finding so much comfort from his cows gave him evident

pleasure. I wonder Henry did not go down on Saturday: he does not in general fall *within* a doubtful intention.

My face is very much as it was before I came away; for the first two or three days it was rather worse. I caught a small cold in my way down, and had some pain every evening, not to last long, but rather severer than it had been lately. This has worn off, however, and I have scarcely felt anything for the last two days.

Sackree is pretty well again, only weak. Much obliged to you for your message, &c.; it was very true that she blessed herself the whole time that the pain was not in her stomach. I read all the scraps I could of your letter to her. She seemed to like it, and says she shall always like to hear anything of Chawton now, and I am to make you Miss Clewes's assurance to the same effect, with thanks and best respects, &c.

The girls are much disturbed at Mary Stacey's not admitting Dame L. Miss C. and I are sorry, but not angry; we acknowledge Mary Stacey's right, and can suppose her to have reason.

Oh! the church must have looked very forlorn. We all thought of the empty pew. How Bentigh is grown! and the Canty. Hill Plantation! And

the improvements *within* are very great. I admire the chintz room very much. We live in the library except at meals, and have a fire every evening. The weather is set about changing; we shall have a settled wet season soon. I must go to bed.

Friday.—I am sorry to find that one of the nightcaps here belongs to you—sorry, because it must be in constant wear.

Great doings again to-day. Fanny, Lizzy, and Mar[nne] are going to Goodnestone for the fair, which is to-morrow, and stay till Monday, and the gentlemen are all to dine at Evington. Edwd. has been repenting ever since he promised to go, and was hoping last night for a wet day, but the morning is fair. I shall dine with Miss Clewes, and I dare say find her very agreeable. The invitation to the fair was general. Edwd. positively declined his share of that, and I was very glad to do the same. It is likely to be a baddish fair—not much upon the stall, and neither Mary O.[1] nor Mary P.[2]

It is hoped that the portfolio may be in Canty. this morning. Sackree's sister found it at Croydon and took it to town with her, but unluckily did

[1] Mary Oxenden. [2] Mary Plumptre.

not send it down till she had directions. Fanny C's. screens can be done nothing with, but there are parts of workbags in the parcel, very important in their way. Three of the Deedes girls are to be at Goodnestone.

We shall not be much settled till this visit is over, settled as to employment I mean. Fanny and I are to go on with Modern Europe together, but hitherto have advanced only twenty-five pages. Something or other has always happened to delay or curtail the reading hour.

I ought to have told you before of a purchase of Edward's in town; he desired you might hear of it—a *thing* for measuring timber with, so that you need not have the trouble of finding him in tapes any longer. He treated himself with this seven-shilling purchase, and bought a new watch and new gun for George. The new gun shoots very well.

Apples are scarce in this country—1*l.* 5*s.* a sack. Miss Hinton should take Hannah Knight. Mrs. Driver has not yet appeared. J. Littleworth and the grey pony reached Bath safely.

A letter from Mrs. Cooke: they have been at Brighton a fortnight; stay at least another, and Mary is already much better.

Poor Dr. Isham is obliged to admire P. and P.,[1] and to send me word that he is sure he shall not like Madame D'Arblay's new novel half so well. Mrs. C. invented it all, of course. He desires his compliments to you and my mother.

Of the Adlestrop living business, Mrs. C. says: 'It can be now no secret, as the papers for the necessary dispensations are going up to the Archbishop's Secretary. However, be it known that we all wish to have it understood that George takes this trust *entirely* to oblige Mr. Leigh, and never will be a shilling benefited by it. Had my consent been necessary, believe me I should have withheld it, for I do think it on the part of the patron a very shabby piece of business. All these and other *Scrapings* from dear Mrs. E. L. are to accumulate no doubt to help Mr. Twisleton to a secure admission again into England.' I would wish you, therefore, to make it known to my mother as if *this* were the first time of Mrs. Cooke's mentioning it to me.

I told Mrs. C. of my mother's late oppressions in *her head*. She says on that subject: 'Dear Mrs. Austen's is, I believe, an attack frequent at her age and mine. Last year I had for some time

[1] 'Pride and Prejudice.'

the sensation of a peck loaf resting on my head, and they talked of cupping me, but I came off with a dose or two of calomel, and have never heard of it since.'

The three Miss Knights and Mrs. Sayce are just off; the weather has got worse since the early morning, and whether Mrs. Clewes and I are to be *tête-à-tête*, or to have four gentlemen to admire us, is uncertain.

I am now alone in the library, mistress of all I survey; at least I may say so, and repeat the whole poem if I like it, without offence to anybody.

Martha will have wet races and catch a bad cold; in other respects I hope she will have much pleasure at them, and that she is free from ear-ache now. I am glad she likes my cap so well. I assure you my old one looked so smart yesterday that I was asked two or three times before I set off whether it was not my new one.

I have *this* moment seen Mrs. Driver driven up to the kitchen door. I cannot close with a grander circumstance or greater wit.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

I am going to write to Steventon, so you need not send any news of me there.

Louisa's best love and a hundred thousand million kisses.

Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.

LXV.

Godmersham Park: Monday (Oct. 11).

[My dearest Aunt Cass.,

I have just asked Aunt Jane to let me write a little in her letter, but she does not like it, so I won't. Good-bye!]

You will have Edward's letter to-morrow. He tells me that he did not send you any news to interfere with mine, but I do not think there is much for anybody to send at present.

We had our dinner party on Wednesday, with the addition of Mrs. and Miss Milles, who were under a promise of dining here in their return from Eastwell, whenever they paid their visit of duty there, and it happened to be paid on that day. Both mother and daughter are much as I have always found them. I like the mother—first, because she reminds me of Mrs. Birch; and, secondly, because she is cheerful and grateful for what she is at the age of ninety and upwards. The day was pleasant enough. I sat by Mr. Chisholme, and we talked

away at a great rate about nothing worth hearing.

It was a mistake as to the day of the Sherers going being fixed; *they* are ready, but are waiting for Mr. Paget's answer.

I inquired of Mrs. Milles after Jemima Brydges, and was quite grieved to hear that she was obliged to leave Canterbury some months ago on account of her debts, and is nobody knows where. What an unprosperous family!

On Saturday, soon after breakfast, Mr. J. P. left us for Norton Court. I like him very much. He gives me the idea of a very amiable young man, only too diffident to be so agreeable as he might be. He was out the chief of each morning with the other two, shooting and getting wet through. To-morrow we are to know whether he and a hundred young ladies will come here for the ball. I do not much expect any.

The Deedes cannot meet us; they have engagements at home. I will finish the Deedes by saying that they are not likely to come here till quite late in my stay—the very last week perhaps; and I do not expect to see the Moores at all. They are not solicited till after Edward's return from Hampshire.

Monday, November 15, is the day now fixed for our setting out.

Poor Basingstoke races! There seem to have been two particularly wretched days on purpose for them; and Weyhill week does not begin much happier.

We were quite surprised by a letter from Anna at Tollard Royal, last Saturday; but perfectly approve her going, and only regret they should all go so far to stay so few days.

We had thunder and lightning here on Thursday morning, between five and seven; no very bad thunder, but a great deal of lightning. It has given the commencement of a season of wind and rain, and perhaps for the next six weeks we shall not have two dry days together.

Lizzy is very much obliged to you for your letter and will answer it soon, but has so many things to do that it may be four or five days before she can. This is quite her own message, spoken in rather a desponding tone. Your letter gave pleasure to all of us; we had all the reading of it of course, I *three times*, as I undertook, to the great relief of Lizzy, to read it to Sackree, and afterwards to Louisa.

Sackree does not at all approve of Mary Doe

and her nuts—on the score of propriety rather than health. She saw some signs of going after her in George and Henry, and thinks if you could give the girl a check, by rather reproving her for taking anything seriously about nuts which they said to her, it might be of use. This, of course, is between our three discreet selves, a scene of triennial bliss.

Mrs. Breton called here on Saturday. I never saw her before. She is a large, ungenteel woman, with self-satisfied and would-be elegant manners.

We are certain of some visitors to-morrow. Edward Bridges comes for two nights in his way from Lenham to Ramsgate, and brings a friend—name unknown—but supposed to be a Mr. Harpur, a neighbouring clergyman; and Mr. R. Mascall is to shoot with the young men, which it is to be supposed will end in his staying dinner.

On Thursday, Mr. Lushington, M.P. for Canterbury, and manager of the Lodge Hounds, dines here, and stays the night. He is chiefly young Edward's acquaintance. If I can I will get a frank from him, and write to you all the sooner. I suppose the Ashford ball will furnish something.

As I wrote of my nephews with a little bitterness in my last, I think it particularly incumbent on me to do them justice now, and I have great

pleasure in saying that they were both at the Sacrament yesterday. After having much praised or much blamed anybody, one is generally sensible of something just the reverse soon afterwards. Now these two boys who are out with the foxhounds will come home and disgust me again by some habit of luxury or some proof of sporting mania, unless I keep it off by this prediction. They amuse themselves very comfortably in the evening by netting; they are each about a rabbit net, and sit as deedily to it, side by side, as any two Uncle Franks could do.

I am looking over 'Self Control' again, and my opinion is confirmed of its being an excellently-meant, elegantly-written work, without anything of nature or probability in it. I declare I do not know whether Laura's passage down the American river is not the most natural, possible, everyday thing she ever does.

Tuesday.—Dear me! what is to become of me? Such a long letter! Two-and-forty lines in the second page. Like Harriot Byron, I ask, what am I to do with my gratitude? I can do nothing but thank you and go on. A few of your inquiries, I think, are replied to *en avance*.

The name of F. Cage's drawing-master is O'Neil.

We are exceedingly amused with your Shalden news, and your self reproach on the subject of Mrs. Stockwell made me laugh heartily. I rather wondered that Johncock,[1] the only person in the room, could help laughing too. I had not heard before of her having the measles. Mrs. H. and Alethea's staying till Friday was quite new to me; a good plan however. I could not have settled it better myself, and am glad they found so much in the house to approve, and I hope they will ask Martha to visit them. I admire the sagacity and taste of Charlotte Williams. Those large dark eyes always judge well. I will compliment her by naming a heroine after her.

Edward has had all the particulars of the building, &c., read to him twice over, and seems very well satisfied. A narrow door to the pantry is the only subject of solicitude; it is certainly just the door which should not be narrow, on account of the trays; but, if a case of necessity, it must be borne.

I *knew* there was sugar in the tin, but had no idea of there being enough to last through your company. All the better. You ought not to think this new loaf better than the other, because *that*

[1] The butler at Godmersham.

was the first of five which all came together. Something of fancy, perhaps, and something of imagination.

Dear Mrs. Digweed! I cannot bear that she should not be foolishly happy after a ball. I hope Miss Yates and her companions were all well the day after their arrival. I am thoroughly rejoiced that Miss Benn has placed herself in lodgings, though I hope they may not be long necessary.

No letter from Charles yet.

Southey's 'Life of Nelson:' I am tired of 'Lives of Nelson,' being that I never read any. I will read this, however, if Frank is mentioned in it.

Here am I in Kent, with one brother in the same county and another brother's wife, and see nothing of them, which seems unnatural. It will not last so for ever, I trust. I should like to have Mrs. F. A. and her children here for a week, but not a syllable of that nature is ever breathed. I wish her last visit had not been so long a one.

I wonder whether Mrs. Tilson has ever lain-in. Mention it if it ever comes to your knowledge, and we shall hear of it by the same post from Henry.

Mr. Rob. Mascall breakfasted here; he eats a great deal of butter. I dined upon goose yesterday, which, I hope, will secure a good sale of my

second edition. Have you any tomatas? Fanny and I regale on them every day.

Disastrous letters from the Plumptres and Oxendens. Refusals everywhere—a blank *partout*—and it is not quite certain whether we go or not; something may depend upon the disposition of Uncle Edward when he comes, and upon what we hear at Chilham Castle this morning, for we are going to pay visits. We are going to each house at Chilham and to Mystole. I shall like seeing the Faggs. I shall like it all, except that we are to set out so early that I have not time to write as I would wish.

Edwd. Bridges's friend is a Mr. Hawker, I find, not Harpur. I would not have you sleep in such an error for the world.

My brother desires his best love and thanks for all your information. He hopes the roots of the old beech have been dug away enough to allow a proper covering of mould and turf. He is sorry for the necessity of building the new coin, but hopes they will contrive that the doorway should be of the usual width—if it must be contracted on one side, by widening it on the other. The appearance need not signify. And he desires me to say that your being at Chawton when he is will

be quite necessary. You cannot think it more indispensable than he does. He is very much obliged to you for your attention to everything. Have you any idea of returning with him to Henrietta Street and finishing your visit then? Tell me your sweet little innocent ideas.

Everything of love and kindness, proper and improper, must now suffice.

Yours very affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.

LXVI.

Godmersham Park: Thursday (Oct. 14).

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA,

Now I will prepare for Mr. Lushington, and as it will be wisest also to prepare for his not coming, or my not getting a frank, I shall write very close from the first, and even leave room for the seal in the proper place. When I have followed up my last with this I shall feel somewhat less unworthy of you than the state of our correspondence now requires.

I left off in a great hurry to prepare for our morning visits. Of course was ready a good deal

the first, and need not have hurried so much. Fanny wore her new gown and cap. I was surprised to find Mystole so pretty.

The ladies were at home. I was in luck, and saw Lady Fagg and all her five daughters, with an old Mrs. Hamilton, from Canterbury, and Mrs. and Miss Chapman, from Margate, into the bargain. I never saw so plain a family—five sisters so very plain! They are as plain as the Foresters, or the Franfraddops, or the Seagraves, or the Rivers, excluding Sophy. Miss Sally Fagg has a pretty figure, and that comprises all the good looks of the family.

It was stupidish; Fanny did her part very well, but there was a lack of talk altogether, and the three friends in the house only sat by and looked at us. However, Miss Chapman's name is Laura, and she had a double flounce to her gown. You really must get some flounces. Are not some of your large stock of white morning gowns just in a happy state for a flounce—too short? Nobody at home at either house in Chilham.

Edward Bridges and his friend did not forget to arrive. The friend is a Mr. Wigram, one of the three-and-twenty children of a great rich mercantile, Sir Robert Wigram, an old acquaintance of

the Footes, but very recently known to Edward B. The history of his coming here is, that, intending to go from Ramsgate to Brighton, Edw. B. persuaded him to take Lenham on his way, which gave him the convenience of Mr. W.'s gig, and the comfort of not being alone there; but, probably thinking a few days of Gm. would be the cheapest and pleasantest way of entertaining his friend and himself, offered a visit here, and here they stay till to-morrow.

Mr. W. is about five or six-and-twenty, not ill-looking, and not agreeable. He is certainly no addition. A sort of cool, gentlemanlike manner, but very silent. They say his name is Henry, a proof how unequally the gifts of fortune are bestowed. I have seen many a John and Thomas much more agreeable.

We have got rid of Mr. R. Mascall, however. I did not like *him* either. He talks too much, and is conceited, besides having a vulgarly shaped mouth. He slept here on Tuesday, so that yesterday Fanny and I sat down to breakfast with six gentlemen to admire us.

We did not go to the ball. It was left to her to decide, and at last she determined against it. She knew that it would be a sacrifice on the part

of her father and brothers if they went, and I hope it will prove that *she* has not sacrificed much. It is not likely that there should have been anybody there whom she would care for. *I* was very glad to be spared the trouble of dressing and going, and being weary before it was half over, so my gown and my cap are still unworn. It will appear at last, perhaps, that I might have done without either. I produced my brown bombazine yesterday, and it was very much admired indeed, and I like it better than ever.

You have given many particulars of the state of Chawton House, but still we want more. Edward wants to be expressly told that all the round tower, &c., is entirely down, and the door from the best room stopped up; he does not know enough of the appearance of things in that quarter.

He heard from Bath yesterday. Lady B. continues very well, and Dr. Parry's opinion is, that while the water agrees with her she ought to remain there, which throws their coming away at a greater uncertainty than we had supposed. It will end, perhaps, in a fit of the gout, which may prevent her coming away. Louisa thinks her mother's being so well may be quite as much

owing to her being so much out of doors as to the water. Lady B. is going to try the hot pump, the Cross bath being about to be painted. Louisa is particularly well herself, and thinks the water has been of use to her. She mentioned our enquiries, &c., to Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Evelyn, and had their best compliments and thanks to give in return. Dr. Parry does not expect Mr. E. to last much longer.

Only think of Mrs. Holder's being dead! Poor woman, she has done the only thing in the world she could possibly do to make one cease to abuse her. Now, if you please, Hooper must have it in his power to do more by his uncle. Lucky for the little girl. An Anne Ekins can hardly be so unfit for the care of a child as a Mrs. Holder.

A letter from Wrotham yesterday offering an early visit here, and Mr. and Mrs. Moore and one child are to come on Monday for ten days. I hope Charles and Fanny may not fix the same time, but if they come at all in October they *must*. What is the use of hoping? The two parties of children is the chief evil.

To be sure, here we are; the very thing has happened, or rather worse—a letter from Charles this very morning, which gives us reason to suppose they may come here to-day. It depends

upon the weather, and the weather now is very fine. No difficulties are made, however, and, indeed, there will be no want of room; but I wish there were no Wigrams and Lushingtons in the way to fill up the table and make us such a motley set. I cannot spare Mr. Lushington either, because of his frank, but Mr. Wigram does no good to anybody. I cannot imagine how a man can have the impudence to come into a family party for three days, where he is quite a stranger, unless he knows himself to be agreeable on undoubted authority. He and Edw. B. are going to ride to Eastwell, and as the boys are hunting, and my brother is gone to Canty., Fanny and I have a quiet morning before us.

Edward has driven off poor Mrs. Salkeld. It was thought a good opportunity of doing something towards clearing the house. By her own desire *Mrs.* Fanny [1] is to be put in the room next the nursery, her baby in a little bed by her; and as Cassy is to have the closet within, and Betsey William's little hole, they will be all very snug together. I shall be most happy to see dear Charles, and he will be as happy as he can with a cross child, or some such care, pressing on him

[1] Mrs. Charles Austen, *née* Fanny Palmer.

at the time. I should be very happy in the idea of seeing little Cassy again, too, did not I fear she would disappoint me by some immediate disagreeableness.

We had the good old original Brett and Toke calling here yesterday, separately. Mr. Toke I am always very fond of. He inquired after you and my mother, which adds esteem to passion. The Charles Cages are staying at Godington. I *knew* they must be staying somewhere soon. Ed. Hussey is warned out of Pett, and talks of fixing at Ramsgate. Bad taste! He is very fond of the sea, however. Some taste in that, and some judgment, too, in fixing on Ramsgate, as being by the sea.

The comfort of the billiard-table here is very great; it draws all the gentlemen to it whenever they are within, especially after dinner, so that my brother, Fanny, and I have the library to ourselves in delightful quiet. There is no truth in the report of G. Hatton being to marry Miss Wemyss. He desires it may be contradicted.

Have you done anything about our present to Miss Benn? I suppose she must have a bed at my mother's whenever she dines there. How will they manage as to inviting her when you are gone?

and if they invite, how will they continue to entertain her?

Let me know as many of your parting arrangements as you can, as to wine, &c. I wonder whether the ink-bottle has been filled. Does butcher's meat keep up at the same price, and is not bread lower than 2*s.* 6*d.*? Mary's blue gown! My mother must be in agonies. I have a great mind to have *my* blue gown dyed some time or other. I proposed it once to you, and you made some objection, I forget what. It is the fashion of flounces that gives it particular expediency.

Mrs. and Miss Wildman have just been here. Miss is very plain. I wish Lady B. may be returned before we leave Gm., that Fanny may spend the time of her father's absence at Goodnestone, which is what she would prefer.

Friday.—They came last night at about seven. We had given them up, but *I still* expected them to come. Dessert was nearly over; a better time for arriving than an hour and a-half earlier. They were late because they did not set out earlier, and did not allow time enough. Charles did not *aim* at more than reaching Sittingbourne by three, which could not have brought them here by dinner time. They had a very rough passage; he would

not have ventured if he had known how bad it would be.

However, here they are, safe and well, just like their own nice selves, Fanny looking as neat and white this morning as possible, and dear Charles all affectionate, placid, quiet, cheerful, good humour. They are both looking very well, but poor little Cassy is grown extremely thin, and looks poorly. I hope a week's country air and exercise may do her good. I am sorry to say it can be but a week. The baby does not appear so large in proportion as she was, nor quite so pretty, but I have seen very little of her. Cassy was too tired and bewildered just at first to seem to know anybody. We met them in the hall—the women and girl part of us—but before we reached the library she kissed me very affectionately, and has since seemed to recollect me in the same way.

It was quite an evening of confusion, as you may suppose. At first we were all walking about from one part of the house to the other; then came a fresh dinner in the breakfast-room for Charles and his wife, which Fanny and I attended; then we moved into the library, were joined by the dining-room people, were introduced, and so forth; and then we had tea and coffee, which was

not over till past 10. Billiards again drew all the odd ones away, and Edward, Charles, the two Fannies, and I sat snugly talking. I shall be glad to have our numbers a little reduced, and by the time you receive this we shall be only a family, though a large family, party. Mr. Lushington goes to-morrow.

Now I must speak of *him*, and I like him very much. I am sure he is clever, and a man of taste. He got a volume of Milton last night, and spoke of it with warmth. He is quite an M.P., very smiling, with an exceeding good address and readiness of language. I am rather in love with him. I dare say he is ambitious and insincere. He puts me in mind of Mr. Dundas. He has a wide smiling mouth, and very good teeth, and something the same complexion and nose. He is a much shorter man, with Martha's leave. Does Martha never hear from Mrs. Craven? Is Mrs. Craven never at home?

We breakfasted in the dining-room to-day, and are now all pretty well dispersed and quiet. Charles and George are gone out shooting together, to Winnigates and Seaton Wood. I asked on purpose to tell Henry. Mr. Lushington and Edwd. are gone some other way. I wish Charles may kill

something, but this high wind is against their sport.

Lady Williams is living at the Rose at Sittingbourne; they called upon her yesterday; she cannot live at Sheerness, and as soon as she gets to Sittingbourne is quite well. In return for all your matches, I announce that her brother William is going marry a Miss Austen, of a Wiltshire family, who say they are related to us.

I talk to Cassy about Chawton; she remembers much, but does not volunteer on the subject. Poor little love! I wish she were not so very Palmery, but it seems stronger than ever. I never knew a wife's family features have such undue influence.

Papa and mamma have not yet made up their mind as to parting with her or not; the chief, indeed the only, difficulty with mamma is a very reasonable one, the child's being very unwilling to leave them. When it was mentioned to her she did not like the idea of it at all. At the same time, she has been suffering so much lately from sea-sickness that her mamma cannot bear to have her much on board this winter. Charles is less inclined to part with her. I do not know how it will end, or what is to determine it. He desires

his best love to you, and has not written because he has not been able to decide. They are both very sensible of your kindness on the occasion.

I have made Charles furnish me with something to say about young Kendall. He is going on very well. When he first joined the 'Namur' my brother did not find him forward enough to be what they call put in the office, and therefore placed him under the schoolmaster, but he is very much improved, and goes into the office now every afternoon, still attending school in the morning.

This cold weather comes very fortunately for Edward's nerves, with such a house full; it suits him exactly; he is all alive and cheerful. Poor James, on the contrary, must be running his toes into the fire. I find that Mary Jane Fowle was very near returning with her brother and paying them a visit on board. I forget exactly what hindered her; I believe the Cheltenham scheme. I am glad something did. They are to go to Cheltenham on Monday se'nnight. I don't vouch for their going, you know; it only comes from one of the family.

Now I think I have written you a good-sized letter, and may deserve whatever I can get in reply. Infinities of love. I must distinguish that

of Fanny, senior, who particularly desires to be remembered to you all.

Yours very affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

Faversham, Oct. 15, 1813.
Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.
Per S. R. Lushington.

LXVII.

Godmersham Park (Oct. 18).

MY DEAR AUNT CASSANDRA,

I am very much obliged to you for your long letter and for the nice account of Chawton. We are all very glad to hear that the Adams are gone, and hope Dame Libscombe will be more happy now with her deaffy child, as she calls it, but I am afraid there is not much chance of her remaining long sole mistress of her house.

I am sorry you had not any better news to send us of our hare, poor little thing! I thought it would not live long in that *Pondy House*; I don't wonder that Mary Doe is very sorry it is dead, because we promised her that if it was alive when we came back to Chawton, we would reward her for her trouble.

Papa is much obliged to you for ordering the scrubby firs to be cut down; I think he was rather

frightened at first about the great oak. Fanny quite believed it, for she exclaimed 'Dear me, what a pity, how could they be so stupid!' I hope by this time they have put up some hurdles for the sheep, or turned out the cart-horses from the lawn.

Pray tell grandmamma that we have begun getting seeds for her; I hope we shall be able to get her a nice collection, but I am afraid this wet weather is very much against them. How glad I am to hear she has had such good success with her chickens, but I wish there had been more bantams amongst them. I am very sorry to hear of poor Lizzie's fate.

I must now tell you something about our poor people. I believe you know old Mary Croucher, she gets *maderer* and *maderer* every day. Aunt Jane has been to see her, but it was on one of her rational days. Poor Will Amos hopes your skewers are doing well; he has left his house in the poor Row, and lives in a barn at Builting. We asked him why he went away, and he said the fleas were so starved when he came back from Chawton that they all flew upon him and *eenermost* eat him up.

How unlucky it is that the weather is so wet!

Poor uncle Charles has come home half drowned every day.

I don't think little Fanny is quite so pretty as she was; one reason is because she wears short petticoats, I believe. I hope Cook is better; she was very unwell the day we went away. Papa has given me half-a-dozen new pencils, which are very good ones indeed; I draw every other day. I hope you go and whip Lucy Chalcraft every night.

Miss Clewes begs me to give her very best respects to you; she is very much obliged to you for your kind enquiries after her. Pray give my duty to grandmamma and love to Miss Floyd. I remain, my dear Aunt Cassandra, your very affectionate niece, ELIZTH. KNIGHT.

Thursday.—I think Lizzy's letter will entertain you. Thank you for yours just received. To-morrow shall be fine if possible. You will be at Guildford before our party set off. They only go to Key Street, as Mr. Street the Purser lives there, and they have promised to dine and sleep with him.

Cassy's looks are much mended. She agrees pretty well with her cousins, but is not quite happy among them; they are too many and too

boisterous for her. I have given her your message, but she said nothing, and did not look as if the idea of going to Chawton again was a pleasant one. They have Edward's carriage to Ospringe.

I think I have just done a good deed—extracted Charles from his wife and children upstairs, and made him get ready to go out shooting, and not keep Mr. Moore waiting any longer.

Mr. and Mrs. Sherer and Joseph dined here yesterday very prettily. Edw. and Geo. were absent—gone for a night to Eastling. The two Fannies went to Canty. in the morning, and took Lou. and Cass. to try on new stays. Harriot and I had a comfortable walk together. She desires her best love to you and kind remembrance to Henry. Fanny's best love also. I fancy there is to be another party to Canty. to-morrow—Mr. and Mrs. Moore and me.

Edward thanks Henry for his letter. We are most happy to hear he is so much better. I depend upon you for letting me know what he wishes as to my staying with him or not; you will be able to find out, I dare say. I had intended to beg you would bring one of my nightcaps with you, in case of my staying, but forgot it when I wrote on Tuesday. Edward is much concerned

about his pond: he cannot now doubt the fact of its running out, which he was resolved to do as long as possible.

I suppose my mother will like to have me write to her. I shall try at least.

No; I have never seen the death of Mrs. Crabbe. I have only just been making out from one of his prefaces that he probably was married. It is almost ridiculous. Poor woman! I will comfort *him* as well as I can, but I do not undertake to be good to her children. She had better not leave any.

Edw. and Geo. set off this day week for Oxford. Our party will then be very small, as the Moores will be going about the same time. To enliven us, Fanny proposes spending a few days soon afterwards at Fredville. It will really be a good opportunity, as her father will have a companion. We shall all three go to Wrotham, but Edwd. and I stay only a night perhaps. Love to Mr Tilson.

Yours very affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen, 10 Henrietta St.,
Covent Garden, London.

LXVIII.

Godmersham Park: Tuesday (Oct. 26).

My dearest Cassandra,

You will have had such late accounts from this place as (I hope) to prevent your expecting a letter from me immediately, as I really do not think I have wherewithal to fabricate one to-day. I suspect this will be brought to you by our nephews; tell me if it is. It is a great pleasure to me to think of you with Henry. I am sure your time must pass most comfortably, and I trust you are seeing improvement in him every day. I shall be most happy to hear from you again. Your Saturday's letter, however, was quite as long and as particular as I could expect. I am not at all in a humour for writing; I must write on till I am.

I congratulate Mr. Tilson, and hope everything is going on well. Fanny and I depend upon knowing what the child's name is to be; as soon as you can tell us. I guess Caroline.

Our gentlemen are all gone to their Sittingbourne meeting, East and West Kent, in one barouche together—rather, West Kent driving East Kent. I believe that is not the usual way of the county. We breakfasted before nine, and do not dine till

half-past six on the occasion, so I hope we three shall have a long morning enough.

Mr. Deedes and Sir Brook—I do not care for Sir Brook's being a baronet; I will put Mr. Deedes first because I like him a great deal the best. They arrived together yesterday, for the Bridges' are staying at Sandling, just before dinner; both gentlemen much as they used to be, only growing a little older. They leave us to-morrow.

You were clear of Guildford by half-an-hour, and were winding along the pleasant road to Ripley when the Charleses set off on Friday. I hope we shall have a visit from them at Chawton in the spring or early part of the summer. They seem well inclined. Cassy had recovered her looks almost entirely, and I find they do not consider the 'Namur' as disagreeing with her in general, only when the weather is so rough as to make her sick.

Our Canterbury scheme took place as proposed, and very pleasant it was—Harriot and I and little George within, my brother on the box with the master coachman. I was most happy to find my brother included in the party. It was a great improvement, and he and Harriot and I walked about together very happily, while Mr.

Moore took his little boy with him to tailor's and hair-cutter's.

Our chief business was to call on Mrs. Milles, and we had, indeed, so little else to do that we were obliged to saunter about anywhere and go backwards and forwards as much as possible to make out the time and keep ourselves from having two hours to sit with the good lady—a most extraordinary circumstance in a Canterbury morning.

Old Toke came in while we were paying our visit. I thought of Louisa. Miss Milles was queer as usual, and provided us with plenty to laugh at. She undertook in *three words* to give us the history of Mrs. Scudamore's reconciliation, and then talked on about it for half-an-hour, using such odd expressions, and so foolishly minute, that I could hardly keep my countenance. The death of Wyndham Knatchbull's son will rather supersede the Scudamores. I told her that he was to be buried at Hatch. She had heard, with military honours, at Portsmouth. We may guess how that point will be discussed evening after evening.

Owing to a difference of clocks the coachman did not bring the carriage so soon as he ought by half-an-hour; anything like a breach of punctuality was a great offence, and Mr. Moore was

very angry, which I was rather glad of. I wanted to see him angry; and, though he spoke to his servant in a very loud voice and with a good deal of heat, I was happy to perceive that he did not scold Harriot at all. Indeed, there is nothing to object to in his manners to her, and I do believe that he makes her—or she makes herself—very happy. They do not spoil their boy.

It seems now quite settled that we go to Wrotham on Saturday, the 13th, spend Sunday there, and proceed to London on Monday, as before intended. I like the plan. I shall be glad to see Wrotham. Harriot is quite as pleasant as ever. We are very comfortable together, and talk over our nephews and nieces occasionally, as may be supposed, and with much unanimity; and I really like Mr. M. better than I expected—see less in him to dislike.

I begin to perceive that you will have this letter to-morrow. It is throwing a letter away to send it by a visitor; there is never convenient time for reading it, and visitor can tell most things as well. I *had* thought with delight of saving you the postage, but money is dirt. If *you* do not regret the loss of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire *I* will not, though I certainly had wished for your

going very much. 'Whatever is, is best.' There has been one infallible Pope in the world.

George Hatton called yesterday, and I saw him, saw him for ten minutes; sat in the same room with him, heard him talk, saw him bow, and was not in raptures. I discerned nothing extraordinary. I should speak of him as a gentlemanlike young man—*eh! bien tout est dit.* We are expecting the ladies of the family this morning.

How do you like your flounce? We have seen only *plain* flounces. I hope you have not cut off the train of your bombazin. I cannot reconcile myself to giving them up as morning gowns; they are so very sweet by candlelight. I would rather sacrifice my blue one for that purpose; in short, I do not know and I do not care.

Thursday or Friday is now mentioned from Bath as the day of setting off. The Oxford scheme is given up. They will go directly to Harefield. Fanny does not go to Fredville, not yet at least.

She has had a letter of excuse from Mary Plumptre to-day. The death of Mr. Ripley, their uncle by marriage, and Mr. P.'s very old friend, prevents their receiving her. Poor blind Mrs. Ripley must be felt for, if there is any feeling to be had for love or money.

We have had another of Edward Bridges' Sunday visits. I think the pleasantest part of his married life must be the dinners, and breakfasts, and luncheons, and billiards that he gets in this way at Gm. Poor wretch! he is quite the dregs of the family as to luck.

I long to know whether you are buying stockings or what you are doing. Remember me most kindly to Mde. B. and Mrs. Perigord. You will get acquainted with my friend, Mr. Philips, and hear him talk from books, and be sure to have something odd happen to you, see somebody that you do not expect, meet with some surprise or other, find some old friend sitting with Henry when you come into the room. Do something clever in that way. Edward and I settled that you went to St. Paul's, Covent Garden, on Sunday. Mrs. Hill will come and see you, or else she won't come and see you and will write instead.

I have had a late account from Steventon, and a baddish one, as far as Ben is concerned. He has declined a curacy (apparently highly eligible), which he might have secured against his taking orders; and, upon its being made rather a serious question, says he has not made up his mind as to taking orders so early, and that, if her father makes

a point of it, he must give Anna up rather than do what he does not approve. They are going on again at present as before, but it cannot last. Mary says that Anna is very unwilling to go to Chawton and will get home again as soon as she can.

Good-bye. Accept this indifferent letter and think it long and good. Miss Clewes is better for some prescription of Mr. Scudamore's, and, indeed, seems tolerably stout now. I find time in the midst of port and Madeira to think of the fourteen bottles of mead very often.

Yours very affectionately, J. A.

Lady Elizabeth, her second daughter, and the two Mrs. Finches have just left us; the two latter friendly, and talking, and pleasant as usual.

Harriot and Fanny's best love.

Miss Austen, 10 Henrietta St.,
Covent Garden, London.

LXIX.

Godmersham Park: Wednesday (Nov. 3).

My dearest Cassandra,

I will keep this celebrated birthday by writing to you, and as my pen seems inclined to write large, I will put my lines very close together. I

had but just time to enjoy your letter yesterday before Edward and I set off in the chair for Canty., and I allowed him to hear the chief of it as we went along.

We rejoice sincerely in Henry's gaining ground as he does, and hope there will be weather for him to get out every day this week, as the likeliest way of making him equal to what he plans for the next. If he is tolerably well, the going into Oxfordshire will make him better, by making him happier.

Can it be, that I have not given you the minutiæ of Edward's plans? See, here they are: To go to Wrotham on Saturday the 13th, spend Sunday there, and be in town on Monday to dinner, and, if agreeable to Henry, spend one whole day with him, which day is likely to be Tuesday, and so go down to Chawton on Wednesday.

But now I cannot be quite easy without staying a little while with Henry, unless he wishes it otherwise; his illness and the dull time of year together make me feel that it would be horrible of me not to offer to remain with him, and therefore unless you know of any objection, I wish you would tell him with my best love that I shall be most happy to spend ten days or a fortnight in Henrietta

St., if he will accept me. I do not offer more than a fortnight, because I shall then have been some time from home; but it will be a great pleasure to be with him, as it always is. I have the less regret and scruple on your account, because I shall see you for a day and a-half, and because you will have Edward for at least a week. My scheme is to take Bookham in my way home for a few days, and my hope that Henry will be so good as to send me some part of the way thither. I have a most kind repetition of Mrs. Cooke's two or three dozen invitations, with the offer of meeting me anywhere in one of her airings.

Fanny's cold is much better. By dosing and keeping her room on Sunday, she got rid of the worst of it, but I am rather afraid of what this day may do for her; she is gone to Canty. with Miss Clewes, Liz., and Ma^rmne., and it is but roughish weather for any one in a tender state. Miss Clewes has been going to Canty. ever since her return, and it is now just accomplishing.

Edward and I had a delightful morning for our drive *there*, I enjoyed it thoroughly; but the day turned off before we were ready, and we came home in some rain and the apprehension of a great deal. It has not done us any harm, however.

He went to inspect the gaol, as a visiting magistrate, and took me with him. I was gratified, and went through all the feelings which people must go through, I think, in visiting such a building. We paid no other visits, only walked about snugly together and shopped. I bought a concert ticket and a sprig of flowers for my old age.

To vary the subject from gay to grave with inimitable address, I shall now tell you something of the Bath party—and still a Bath party they are, for a fit of the gout came on last week. The accounts of Lady B. are as good as can be under such a circumstance; Dr. P. says it appears a good sort of gout, and her spirits are better than usual, but as to her coming away, it is of course all uncertainty. I have very little doubt of Edward's going down to Bath, if they have not left it when he is in Hampshire; if he does, he will go on from Steventon, and then return direct to London, without coming back to Chawton. This detention does not suit his feelings. It may be rather a good thing, however, that Dr. P. should see Lady B. with the gout on her. Harriot was quite wishing for it.

The day seems to improve. I wish my pen would, too.

Sweet Mr. Ogle. I dare say he sees all the panoramas for nothing, has free admittance everywhere; he is so delightful! Now, you need not see anybody else.

I am glad to hear of our being likely to have a peep at Charles and Fanny at Christmas, but do not force poor Cass. to stay if she hates it. You have done very right as to Mrs. F. A. Your tidings of S. and S. give me pleasure. I have never seen it advertised.

Harriot, in a letter to Fanny to-day, enquires whether they sell cloths for pelisses at Bedford House, and, if they do, will be very much obliged to you to desire them to send her down patterns, with the width and prices; they may go from Charing Cross almost any day in the week, but if it is a *ready money* house it will not do, for the *bru* of *feu*[1] the Archbishop says she cannot pay for it immediately. Fanny and I suspect they do not deal in the article.

The Sherers, I believe, are now really going to go; Joseph has had a bed here the two last nights, and I do not know whether this is not the day

[1] This expression completely puzzles me. It is clearly written 'Bru of feu' or 'face,' and may have been some joke in connection with the fact that 'Harriot' was the daughter-in-law of Archbishop Moore, but, if so, the joke is lost.

of moving. Mrs. Sherer called yesterday to take leave. The weather looks worse again.

We dine at Chilham Castle to-morrow, and I expect to find some amusement, but more from the concert the next day, as I am sure of seeing several that I want to see. We are to meet a party from Goodnestone, Lady B., Miss Hawley, and Lucy Foote, and I am to meet Mrs. Harrison, and we are to talk about Ben and Anna. 'My dear Mrs. Harrison,' I shall say, 'I am afraid the young man has some of your family madness, and though there often appears to be something of madness in Anna too, I think she inherits more of it from her mother's family than from ours.' That is what I shall say, and I think she will find it difficult to answer me.

I took up your letter again to refresh me, being somewhat tired, and was struck with the prettiness of the hand: it is really a very pretty hand now and then—so small and so neat! I wish I could get as much into a sheet of paper.[1] Another time I will take two days to make a letter in: it is fatiguing to write a whole long one at once. I hope to

[1] I cannot pass this paragraph over without remarking that it is hardly possible to imagine anything neater or prettier than Jane's own hand. Most of her letters are beautifully written, and the MS. of her 'Lady Susan' remarkably so.

hear from you again on Sunday and again on Friday, the day before we move. On Monday, I suppose, you will be going to Streatham, to see quiet Mr. Hill and eat very bad baker's bread.

A fall in bread by-the-bye. I hope my mother's bill next week will show it. I have had a very comfortable letter from her, one of her fools-cap sheets quite full of little home news. Anna was there the first of the two days. An Anna sent away and an Anna fetched are different things. This will be an excellent time for Ben to pay his visit, now that we, the formidables, are absent.

I did not mean to eat, but Mr. Johncock has brought in the tray, so I must. I am all alone. Edward is gone into his woods. At this present time I have five tables, eight-and-twenty chairs, and two fires all to myself.

Miss Clewes is to be invited to go to the concert with us; there will be my brother's place and ticket for her, as he cannot go. He and the other connections of the Cages are to meet at Milgate that very day, to consult about a proposed alteration of the Maidstone road, in which the Cages are very much interested. Sir Brook comes here in the morning, and they are to be joined by Mr. Deedes at Ashford. The loss of the concert will

be no great evil to the Squire. We shall be a party of three ladies therefore, and to meet three ladies.

What a convenient carriage Henry's is, to his friends in general! Who has it next? I am glad William's going is voluntary, and on no worse grounds. An inclination for the country is a venial fault. He has more of Cowper than of Johnson in him—fonder of tame hares and blank verse than of the full tide of human existence at Charing Cross.

Oh! I have more of such sweet flattery from Miss Sharp. She is an excellent kind friend. I am read and admired in Ireland, too. There is a Mrs. Fletcher, the wife of a judge, an old lady, and very good and very clever, who is all curiosity to know about me—what I am like, and so forth. I am not known to her by *name*, however. This comes through Mrs. Carrick, not through Mrs. Gore. You are quite out there.

I do not despair of having my picture in the Exhibition at last—all white and red, with my head on one side; or perhaps I may marry young Mr. D'Arblay. I suppose in the meantime I shall owe dear Henry a great deal of money for printing, &c.

I hope Mrs. Fletcher will indulge herself with S. and S. If I *am* to stay in H. S., and if you should be writing home soon, I wish you would be so good as to give a hint of it, for I am not likely to write there again these ten days, having written yesterday.

Fanny has set her heart upon its being a Mr. Brett who is going to marry a Miss Dora Best, of this country. I dare say Henry has no objection. Pray, where did the boys sleep?

The Deedes come here on Monday to stay till Friday, so that we shall end with a flourish the last canto. They bring Isabella and one of the grown-ups, and will come in for a Canty. ball on Thursday. I shall be glad to see them. Mrs. Deedes and I must talk rationally together, I suppose.

Edward does not write to Henry, because of my writing so often. God bless you. I shall be so glad to see you again, and I wish you many happy returns of this day. Poor Lord Howard! How he does cry about it!

Yours very truly, J. A.

Miss Austen, 10 Henrietta St.,
Covent Garden, London.

LXX.

Godmersham Park: Saturday (Nov. 6).

My dearest Cassandra,

Having half-an-hour before breakfast (very snug, in my own room, lovely morning, excellent fire—fancy me!) I will give you some account of the last two days. And yet, what is there to be told? I shall get foolishly minute unless I cut the matter short.

We met only the Bretons at Chilham Castle, besides a Mr. and Mrs. Osborne and a Miss Lee staying in the house, and were only fourteen altogether. My brother and Fanny thought it the pleasantest party they had ever known there, and I was very well entertained by bits and scraps. I had long wanted to see Dr. Breton, and his wife amuses me very much with her affected refinement and elegance. Miss Lee I found very conversable; she admires Crabbe as she ought. She is at an age of reason, ten years older than myself at least. She was at the famous ball at Chilham Castle, so of course you remember her.

By-the-bye, as I must leave off being young, I find many *douceurs* in being a sort of *chaperon*, for I am put on the sofa near the fire, and can

drink as much wine as I like. We had music in the evening: Fanny and Miss Wildman played, and Mr. James Wildman sat close by and listened, or pretended to listen.

Yesterday was a day of dissipation all through: first came Sir Brook to dissipate us before breakfast; then there was a call from Mr. Sherer, then a regular morning visit from Lady Honeywood in her way home from Eastwell; then Sir Brook and Edward set off; then we dined (five in number) at half-past four; then we had coffee; and at six Miss Clewes, Fanny, and I drove away. We had a beautiful night for our frisks. We were earlier than we need have been, but after a time Lady B. and her two companions appeared—we had kept places for them; and there we sat, all six in a row, under a side wall, I between Lucy Foote and Miss Clewes.

Lady B. was much what I expected; I could not determine whether she was rather handsome or very plain. I liked her for being in a hurry to have the concert over and get away, and for getting away at last with a great deal of decision and promptness, not waiting to compliment and dawdle and fuss about seeing *dear Fanny*, who was half the evening in another part of the room with

her friends the Plumptres. I am growing too minute, so I will go to breakfast.

When the concert was over, Mrs. Harrison and I found each other out, and had a very comfortable little complimentary friendly chat. She is a sweet woman—still quite a sweet woman in herself, and so like her sister! I could almost have thought I was speaking to Mrs. Lefroy. She introduced me to her daughter, whom I think pretty, but most dutifully inferior to *la Mère Beauté*. The Faggs and the Hammonds were there —Wm. Hammond the only young man of renown. *Miss* looked very handsome, but I prefer her little smiling flirting sister Julia.

I was just introduced at last to Mary Plumptre, but should hardly know her again. She was delighted with *me*, however, good enthusiastic soul! And Lady B. found me handsomer than she expected, so you see I am not so very bad as you might think for.

It was 12 before we reached home. We were all dog-tired, but pretty well to-day: Miss Clewes says she has not caught cold, and Fanny's does not seem worse. I was so tired that I began to wonder how I should get through the ball next Thursday; but there will be so much more variety then in

walking about, and probably so much less heat, that perhaps I may not feel it more. My China crape is still kept for the ball. Enough of the concert.

I had a letter from Mary yesterday. They travelled down to Cheltenham last Monday very safely, and are certainly to be there a month. Bath is still Bath. The H. Bridges' must quit them early next week, and Louisa seems not quite to despair of their all moving together, but to those who see at a distance there appears no chance of it. Dr. Parry does not want to keep Lady B. at Bath when she can once move. That is lucky. You will see poor Mr. Evelyn's death.

Since I wrote last, my 2nd edit. has stared me in the face. Mary tells me that Eliza means to buy it. I wish she may. It can hardly depend upon any more Fyfield Estates. I cannot help hoping that *many* will feel themselves obliged to buy it. I shall not mind imagining it a disagreeable duty to them, so as they do it. Mary heard before she left home that it was very much admired at Cheltenham, and that it was given to Miss Hamilton. It is pleasant to have such a respectable writer named. I cannot tire *you*, I am sure, on this subject, or I would apologise.

What weather, and what news! We have enough to do to admire them both. I hope you derive your full share of enjoyment from each.

I have extended my lights and increased my acquaintance a good deal within these two days. Lady Honeywood you know; I did not sit near enough to be a perfect judge, but I thought her extremely pretty, and her manners have all the recommendations of ease and good humour and unaffectedness; and, going about with four horses and nicely dressed herself, she is altogether a perfect sort of woman.

Oh, and I saw Mr. Gipps last night—the useful Mr. Gipps, whose attentions came in as acceptably to us in handing us to the carriage, for want of a better man, as they did to Emma Plumptre. I thought him rather a good-looking little man.

I long for your letter to-morrow, particularly that I may know my fate as to London. My first wish is that Henry should really choose what he likes best; I shall certainly not be sorry if he does not want me. Morning church to-morrow; I shall come back with impatient feelings.

The Sherers are gone, but the Pagets are not come; we shall therefore have Mr. S. again. Mr. Paget acts like an unsteady man. Dr. Mant,

however, gives him a very good character; what is wrong is to be imputed to the lady. I dare say the house likes female government.

I have a nice long black and red letter from Charles, but not communicating much that I did not know.

There is some chance of a good ball next week, as far as females go. Lady Bridges may perhaps be there with some Knatchbulls. Mrs. Harrison, perhaps, with Miss Oxenden and the Miss Papillons; and if Mrs. Harrison, then Lady Fagg will come.

The shades of evening are descending, and I resume my interesting narrative. Sir Brook and my brother came back about four, and Sir Brook almost immediately set forward again to Goodnestone. We are to have Edwd. B. to-morrow, to pay us another Sunday's visit—the last, for more reasons than one; they all come home on the same day that we go. The Deedes do not come till Tuesday; Sophia is to be the comer. She is a disputable beauty that I want much to see. Lady Eliz. Hatton and Annamaria called here this morning. Yes, they called; but I do not think I can say anything more about them. They came, and they sat, and they went.

Sunday.—Dearest Henry! What a turn he has

for being ill, and what a thing bile is! This attack has probably been brought on in part by his previous confinement and anxiety; but, however it came, I hope it is going fast, and that you will be able to send a very good account of him on Tuesday. As I hear on Wednesday, of course I shall not expect to hear again on Friday. Perhaps a letter to Wrotham would not have an ill effect.

We are to be off on Saturday before the post comes in, as Edward takes his own horses all the way. He talks of 9 o'clock. We shall bait at Lenham.

Excellent sweetness of you to send me such a nice long letter; it made its appearance, with one from my mother, soon after I and my impatient feelings walked in. How glad I am that I did what I did! I was only afraid that *you* might think the offer superfluous, but you have set my heart at ease. Tell Henry that I *will* stay with him, let it be ever so disagreeable to him.

Oh, dear me! I have not time on paper for half that I want to say. There have been two letters from Oxford—one from George yesterday. They got there very safely—Edwd. two hours behind the coach, having lost his way in leaving

London. George writes cheerfully and quietly; hopes to have Utterson's rooms soon; went to lecture on Wednesday, states some of his expenses, and concludes with saying, 'I am afraid I shall be poor.' I am glad he thinks about it so soon. I believe there is no private tutor yet chosen, but my brother is to hear from Edwd. on the subject shortly.

You, and Mrs. H., and Catherine, and Alethea going about together in Henry's carriage seeing sights—I am not used to the idea of it yet. All that you are to see of Streatham, seen already! Your Streatham and my Bookham may go hang. The prospect of being taken down to Chawton by Henry perfects the plan to me. I was in hopes of your seeing some illuminations, and you *have* seen them. 'I thought you would come, and you *did* come.' I am sorry *he* is not to *come* from the Baltic sooner. Poor Mary!

My brother has a letter from Louisa to-day of an unwelcome nature; they are to spend the winter at Bath. It was just decided on. Dr. Parry wished it, not from thinking the water necessary to Lady B., but that he might be better able to judge how far his treatment of her, which is totally different from anything she had been used to, is

right; and I suppose he will not mind having a few more of her Ladyship's guineas. His system is a lowering one. He took twelve ounces of blood from her when the gout appeared, and forbids wine, &c. Hitherto, the plan agrees with her. *She* is very well satisfied to stay, but it is a sore disappointment to Louisa and Fanny.

The H. Bridges leave them on Tuesday, and they mean to move into a smaller house; you may guess how Edward feels. There can be no doubt of his going to Bath now; I should not wonder if he brought Fanny Cage back with him.

You shall hear from me once more, some day or other.

Yours very affectionately, J. A.

We do not like Mr. Hampson's scheme.

Miss Austen, 10 Henrietta Street,
Covent Garden, London.

1814

I IMAGINE that the sisters were but seldom separated in 1814, since I have but five letters belonging to that year. The first two are from Henrietta Street, Henry Austen's house, and were written in

March. My mother had accompanied my grandfather to Chawton and Bath in February, where her grandmother, Lady Bridges, was staying for the benefit of the waters, and on their return home they paid Henry Austen a visit, arriving on Saturday, the 5th, and staying till Wednesday, the 9th of March. It was very cold weather, for in the winter and spring 1813-14 there were seventeen weeks of frost consecutively, and it was recorded as the hardest winter which had been known for twenty years. The weather, however, did not prevent the party in Henrietta Street from amusing themselves to the best of their ability. The visitors from Bath arrived shortly before five, and after dinner 'Aunt Jane' and her niece were escorted by Henry Austen to Drury Lane, to see Mr. Kean in 'Shylock.' Of this evening Aunt Jane says (Letter 71), 'We were quite satisfied with Kean,' whilst her younger companion notes in her diary, 'We were delighted.' In this same letter is the remark, 'Young Wyndham accepts the invitation. He is such a nice, gentleman-like, unaffected sort of young man that I think he may do for Fanny.' I think this must mean my uncle Dr. Knatchbull; the description does not agree with that which

Mrs. Knight (Catherine Knatchbull) gives of her 'nephew Wyndham' in her letter to my father (see Appendix), and moreover, this son of 'old' Wyndham Knatchbull would seem to have died in 1813 (see Letter 68), unless there were two sons besides those two given in the Baronetage who survived their father's death in 1833.

This letter, continued on the two following days, tells us that on Sunday 'Fanny and I' drove in the park. I am happy to be able to narrate the fact, gathered from the pocket-books, that they previously went to church at St. Paul's, Covent Garden. They 'could not stir in the carriage' on account of the snow, but somehow or other managed to get to Covent Garden Theatre on Monday night, of which the letter duly informs us, corroborated by the pocket-book, which says in addition that 'Miss Stephens' voice was delightful.'

In this letter is an allusion to a law-suit in which my grandfather, Edward Austen, was involved, in consequence of a claim made upon his Chawton estates by a person of the name of Baverstoke. I do not know the exact circumstances, but believe the claim was founded upon the alleged

insufficient barring of an entail. There is a curious story connected with this law-suit, to the effect that an old, long since deceased Mr. Knight appeared twice or thrice in a dream to the claimant, and informed him that he was the rightful owner of Chawton. Whether this was the cause of the law-suit or not, I cannot say, or whether the deceased gentleman took any further steps after the matter had been settled, but in any case it harassed Mr. Austen from 1814 (in the October of which year he was formally served with a writ of ejectment) to 1817, and he then compromised it by the payment of a certain sum of money, so that the 'opponent' could hardly have 'knocked under' in 1814, as 'Jane' supposed. On Tuesday was another night of theatrical dissipation, into which the party appear to have been led by Mr. John Pemberton Plumptre, who seems to have been much with them, and between whom and his niece Fanny Henry Austen thought he had discovered a 'decided attachment.' On Wednesday Edward Austen and his daughter betook themselves to Godmersham, and the next news I have of Jane is in my mother's diary for April, in which it appears that she went with her father and two eldest

brothers, accompanied by Miss Clewes and her pupils, Louisa and Marianne, to Chawton Great House, on the 22nd, and that 'Aunt Cass. and Jane walked up in the evening.' 'The Cottage' and the 'Great House' lived on their usual intimate terms until June 20, when the Godmersham party went home. Every day the diary duly informs us that 'the Cottage dined here,' or 'papa and I dined at the Cottage,' 'Aunt Jane drank tea here,' 'Aunt Jane and I spent a bustling hour or two shopping in Alton;' but I can collect no more than that, as usual, the aunt and niece were much together; that the Bridges party, from Bath, came to spend a few days; that the illuminations for the peace took place at that time, and that 'Aunt Jane' seems to have taken part in all the proceedings of her relations. Her next letter (seventy-three) to her sister Cassandra was written during this visit of Godmersham to Chawton, under date June 13, Cassandra being with her brother Henry in Henrietta Street. There is nothing to require notice in this or the next letter, on June 20, and the last of 1814 is written on August 14, from Hans Place, when Jane had exchanged places with her sister. 'Tilson's Bank'

was in Henrietta Street, which accounts for visits thereto on the part of Henry Austen being mentioned whilst he had a house elsewhere. But there must have been a dwelling-house attached to the bank, and it would seem as if he occupied this between his living in Sloane Street and moving to Hans Place.

LXXI.

Henrietta Street: Saturday (March 5).

My dear Cassandra,

Do not be angry with me for beginning another letter to you. I have read the 'Corsair,' mended my petticoat, and have nothing else to do. Getting out is impossible It is a nasty day for everybody. Edward's spirits will be wanting sunshine, and here is nothing but thickness and sleet; and though these two rooms are delightfully warm, I fancy it is very cold abroad.

Young Wyndham accepts the invitation. He is such a nice, gentlemanlike, unaffected sort of young man, that I think he may do for Fanny; has a sensible, quiet look, which one likes. Our fate with Mrs. L. and Miss E. is fixed for this day se'nnight. A civil note is come from Miss H. Moore,

to apologise for not returning my visit to-day, and ask us to join a small party this evening. Thank ye, but we shall be better engaged.

I was speaking to Mde. B. this morning about a boiled loaf, when it appeared that her master has no raspberry jam; *she* has some, which of course she is determined he shall have; but cannot you bring him a pot when you come?

Sunday.—I find a little time before breakfast for writing. It was considerably past four when they arrived yesterday, the roads were so very bad! As it was, they had four horses from Cranford Bridge. Fanny was miserably cold at first, but they both seem well.

No possibility of Edwd.'s writing. His opinion, however, inclines *against* a second prosecution; he thinks it would be a vindictive measure. He might think differently, perhaps, on the spot. But things must take their chance.[1]

We were quite satisfied with Kean. I cannot imagine better acting, but the part was too short; and, excepting him and Miss Smith, and *she* did not quite answer my expectation, the parts were ill filled and the play heavy. We were too much tired to stay for the whole of 'Illusion' ('Nour-jahad'),

[1] There is no clue to the matter to which this refers.

which has three acts; there is a great deal of finery and dancing in it, but I think little merit. Elliston was 'Nour-jahad,' but it is a solemn sort of part, not at all calculated for his powers. There was nothing of the *best* Elliston about him. I might not have known him but for his voice.

A grand thought has struck me as to our gowns. This six weeks' mourning makes so great a difference that I shall not go to Miss Hare till you can come and help choose yourself, unless you particularly wish the contrary. It may be hardly worth while perhaps to have the gowns so expensively made up. We may buy a cap or a *veil* instead; but we can talk more of this together.

Henry is just come down; he seems well, his cold does not increase. I expected to have found Edward seated at a table writing to Louisa, but I was first. Fanny I left fast asleep. She was doing about last night when *I* went to sleep, a little after one. I am most happy to find there were but *five* shirts. She thanks you for your note, and reproaches herself for not having written to you, but I assure her there was no occasion.

The accounts are not capital of Lady B. Upon the whole, I believe, Fanny liked Bath very well. They were only out three evenings, to one play

and each of the rooms. Walked about a good deal, and saw a good deal of the Harrisons and Wildmans. All the Bridgeses are likely to come away together, and Louisa will probably turn off at Dartford to go to Harriot. Edward is quite (MS. torn).

Now we are come from church, and all going to write. Almost everybody was in mourning last night, but my brown gown did very well. Genl. Chowne was introduced to me; he has not much remains of Frederick. This young Wyndham does not come after all; a very long and very civil note of excuse is arrived. It makes one moralise upon the ups and downs of this life.

I have determined to trim my lilac sarsenet with black satin ribbon just as my China crape is, 6*d.* width at the bottom, 3*d.* or 4*d.* at top. Ribbon trimmings are all the fashion at Bath, and I dare say the fashions of the two places are alike enough in that point to content *me*. With this addition it will be a very useful gown, happy to go anywhere.

Henry has this moment said that he likes my M. P.[1] better and better; he is in the third volume. I believe *now* he has changed his mind as to

[1] 'Mansfield Park.'

foreseeing the end; he said yesterday, at least, that he defied anybody to say whether H. C.[1] would be reformed, or would forget Fanny in a fortnight.

I shall like to see Kean again excessively, and to see him with you too. It appeared to me as if there were no fault in him anywhere; and in his scene with 'Tubal' there was exquisite acting.

Edward has had a correspondence with Mr. Wickham on the Baigent business, and has been showing me some letters enclosed by Mr. W. from a friend of his, a lawyer, whom he had consulted about it, and whose opinion is *for* the prosecution for assault, supposing the boy is acquitted on the first, which he rather expects. Excellent letters; and I am sure he must be an excellent man. They are such thinking, clear, considerate letters as Frank might have written. I long to know who he is, but the name is always torn off. He was consulted only as a friend. When Edwd. gave me *his* opinions against the second prosecution he had not read this letter, which was waiting for him here. Mr. W. is to be on the grand jury. This business must hasten an intimacy between his family and my brothers.

[1] Henry Crawford.

Fanny cannot answer your question about button-holes till she gets home.

I have never told you, but soon after Henry and I began our journey he said, talking of yours, that he should desire you to come post at his expense, and added something of the carriage meeting you at Kingston. He has said nothing about it since.

Now I have just read Mr. Wickham's letter, by which it appears that the letters of his friend were sent to my brother quite confidentially, therefore don't tell. By his expression, this friend must be one of the judges.

A cold day, but bright and clear. I am afraid your planting can hardly have begun. I am sorry to hear that there has been a rise in tea. I do not mean to pay Twining till later in the day, when we may order a fresh supply. I long to know something of the mead, and how you are off for a cook.

Monday.—Here's a day! The ground covered with snow! What is to become of us? We were to have walked out early to near shops, and had the carriage for the more distant. Mr. Richard Snow is dreadfully fond of us. I dare say he has stretched himself out at Chawton too.

Fanny and I went into the park yesterday and

drove about, and were very much entertained; and our dinner and evening went off very well. Messrs. J. Plumptre and J. Wildman called while we were out, and we had a glimpse of them both, and of G. Hatton too, in the park. *I* could not produce a single acquaintance.

By a little convenient listening, I now know that Henry wishes to go to Gm. for a few days before Easter, and has indeed promised to do it. This being the case, there can be no time for your remaining in London after your return from Adlestrop. You must not put off your coming therefore; and it occurs to me that, instead of my coming here again from Streatham, it will be better for you to join me there. It is a great comfort to have got at the truth. Henry finds he cannot set off for Oxfordshire before the Wednesday, which will be the 23rd; but we shall not have too many days together here previously. I shall write to Catherine very soon.

Well, we have been out as far as Coventry St.; Edwd. escorted us there and back to Newton's, where he left us, and I brought Fanny safe home. It was snowing the whole time. We have given up all idea of the carriage. Edward and Fanny stay another day, and both seem very

well pleased to do so. Our visit to the Spencers is, of course, put off.

Edwd. heard from Louisa this morning. Her mother does not get better, and Dr. Parry talks of her beginning the waters again; this will be keeping them longer in Bath, and of course is not palatable

You cannot think how much my ermine tippet is admired both by father and daughter. It was a noble gift.

Perhaps you have not heard that Edward has a good chance of escaping his lawsuit. His opponent 'knocks under.' The terms of agreement are not quite settled.

We are to see 'The Devil to Pay' to-night. I expect to be very much amused. Excepting Miss Stephens, I daresay 'Artaxerxes' will be very tiresome.

A great many pretty caps in the windows of Cranbourn Alley. I hope when you come we shall both be tempted. I have been ruining myself in black satin ribbon with a proper pearl edge, and now I am trying to draw it up into kind of roses instead of putting it in plain double plaits.

Tuesday.—My dearest Cassandra,—In ever so many hurries I acknowledge the receipt of your letter last night, just before we set off for Covent

Garden. I have no mourning come, but it does not signify. This very moment has Richd. put it on the table. I have torn it open and read your note. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Edwd. is amazed at the sixty-four trees. He desires his love, and gives you notice of the arrival of a study table for himself. It ought to be at Chawton this week. He begs you to be so good as to have it enquired for and fetched by the cart, but wishes it not to be unpacked till he is on the spot himself. It may be put in the hall.

Well, Mr. Hampson dined here, and all that. I was very tired of 'Artaxerxes,' highly amused with the farce, and, in an inferior way, with the pantomime that followed. Mr. J. Plumptre joined in the latter part of the evening, walked home with us, ate some soup, and is very earnest for our going to Covent Garden again to-night to see Miss Stephens in the 'Farmer's Wife.' He is to try for a box. I do not particularly wish him to succeed. I have had enough for the present. Henry dines to-day with Mr. Spencer.

Yours very affectionately, J. Austen.

Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favour of Mr. Gray.

LXXII.

Henrietta St.: Wednesday (March 9).

Well, we went to the play again last night, and as we were out a great part of the morning too, shopping, and seeing the Indian jugglers, I am very glad to be quiet now till dressing time. We are to dine at the Tilsons', and to-morrow at Mr. Spencer's.

We had not done breakfast yesterday when Mr. J. Plumptre appeared to say that he had secured a box. Henry asked him to dine here, which I fancy he was very happy to do, and so at five o'clock we four sat down to table together while the master of the house was preparing for going out himself. The 'Farmer's Wife' is a musical thing in three acts, and, as Edward was steady in not staying for anything more, we were at home before ten.

Fanny and Mr. J. P. are delighted with Miss S., and her merit in singing is, I dare say, very great; that she gave *me* no pleasure is no reflection upon her, nor, I hope, upon myself, being what Nature made me on that article. All that I am sensible of in Miss S. is a pleasing person and no skill in acting. We had Mathews, Liston, and Emery; of course, some amusement.

Our friends were off before half-past eight this

morning, and had the prospect of a heavy cold journey before them. I think they both liked their visit very much. I am sure Fanny did. Henry sees decided attachment between her and his new acquaintance.

I have a cold, too, as well as my mother and Martha. Let it be a generous emulation between us which can get rid of it first.

I wear my gauze gown to-day, long sleeves and all. I shall see how they succeed, but as yet I have no reason to suppose long sleeves are allowable. I have lowered the bosom, especially at the corners, and plaited black satin ribbon round the top. Such will be my costume of vine-leaves and paste.

Prepare for a play the very first evening, I rather think Covent Garden, to see Young in 'Richard.' I have answered for your little companion's being conveyed to Keppel St. immediately. I have never yet been able to get there myself, but hope I shall soon.

What cruel weather this is! and here is Lord Portsmouth married, too, to Miss Hanson.[1]

Henry has finished 'Mansfield Park,' and his approbation has not lessened. He found the last half of the last volume *extremely interesting*.

[1] His second wife. He died in 1853, and was succeeded by his brother, the father of the present earl.

I suppose my mother recollects that she gave me no money for paying Brecknell and Twining, and *my* funds will not supply enough.

We are home in such good time that I can finish my letter to-night, which will be better than getting up to do it to-morrow, especially as, on account of my cold, which has been very heavy in my head this evening, I rather think of lying in bed later than usual. I would not but be well enough to go to Hertford St. on any account.

We met only Genl. Chowne to-day, who has not much to say for himself. I was ready to laugh at the remembrance of Frederick, and such a different Frederick as we chose to fancy him to the real Christopher!

Mrs. Tilson had long sleeves, too, and she assured me that they are worn in the evening by many. I was glad to hear this. She dines here, I believe, next Tuesday.

On Friday we are to be snug with only Mr. Barlowe and an evening of business. I am so pleased that the mead is brewed. Love to all. I have written to Mrs. Hill, and care for nobody.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favour of Mr. Gray.

LXXIII.

Chawton: Tuesday (June 13).

My dearest Cassandra,

Fanny takes my mother to Alton this morning, which gives me an opportunity of sending you a few lines without any other trouble than that of writing them.

This is a delightful day in the country, and I hope not much too hot for town. Well, you had a good journey, I trust, and all that, and not rain enough to spoil your bonnet. It appeared so likely to be a wet evening that I went up to the Gt. House between three and four, and dawdled away an hour very comfortably, though Edwd. was not very brisk. The air was clearer in the evening and he was better. We all five walked together into the kitchen garden and along the Gosport road, and they drank tea with us.

You will be glad to hear that G. Turner has another *situation*, something in the cow line, near Rumsey, and he wishes to move immediately, which is not likely to be inconvenient to anybody.

The new nurseryman at Alton comes this morning to value the crops in the garden.

The only letter to-day is from Mrs. Cooke to me.

They do not leave home till July, and want me to come to them, according to my promise. And, after considering everything, I have resolved on going. My companions promote it. I will not go, however, till after Edward is gone, that he may feel he has a somebody to give memorandums to, to the last. I must give up all help from his carriage, of course. And, at any rate, it must be such an excess of expense that I have quite made up my mind to it and do not mean to care.

I have been thinking of Triggs and the chair, you may be sure, but I know it will end in posting. They will meet me at Guildford.

In addition to their standing claims on me they admire 'Mansfield Park' exceedingly. Mr. Cooke says 'it is the most sensible novel he ever read,' and the manner in which I treat the clergy delights them very much. Altogether, I must go, and I want you to join me there when your visit in Henrietta St. is over. Put this into your capacious head.

Take care of yourself, and do not be trampled to death in running after the Emperor. The report in Alton yesterday was that they would certainly travel this road either to or from Portsmouth. I long to know what this bow of the Prince's will produce.

I saw Mrs. Andrews yesterday. Mrs. Browning had seen her before. She is very glad to send an Elizabeth.

Miss Benn continues the same. Mr. Curtis, however, saw her yesterday and said her hand was going on as well as possible. Accept our best love.

Yours very affectionately, J. Austen.

Miss Austen, 10 Henrietta Street.
By favour of Mr. Gray.

LXXIV.

Thursday (June 23).

Dearest Cassandra,

I received your pretty letter while the children were drinking tea with us, as Mr. Louch was so obliging as to walk over with it. Your good account of everybody made us very happy.

I heard yesterday from Frank. When he began his letter he hoped to be here on Monday, but before it was ended he had been told that the naval review would not take place till Friday, which would probably occasion him some delay, as he cannot get some necessary business of his own attended to while Portsmouth is in such a bustle. I hope Fanny has seen the Emperor, and then I may fairly wish them all away. I go to-morrow, and hope for some delays and adventures.

My mother's wood is brought in, but, by some mistake, no bavins. She must therefore buy some.

Henry at White's! Oh, what a Henry! I do not know what to wish as to Miss B., so I will hold my tongue and my wishes.

Sackree and the children set off yesterday, and have not been returned back upon us. They were all very well the evening before. We had handsome presents from the Gt. House yesterday—a ham and the four leeches. Sackree has left some shirts of her master's at the school, which, finished or unfinished, she begs to have sent by Henry and Wm. Mr. Hinton is expected home soon, which is a good thing for the shirts.

We have called upon Miss Dusantoy and Miss Papillon, and been very pretty. Miss D. has a great idea of being Fanny Price—she and her youngest sister together, who is named Fanny.

Miss Benn has drank tea with the Prowtings, and, I believe, comes to us this evening. She has still a swelling about the fore-finger and a little discharge, and does not seem to be on the point of a perfect cure, but her spirits are good, and she will be most happy, I believe, to accept any invitation. The Clements are gone to Petersfield to look.

Only think of the Marquis of Granby being dead. I hope, if it please Heaven there should be another son, they will have better sponsors and less parade.

I certainly do not *wish* that Henry should think again of getting me to town. I would rather return straight from Bookham; but, if he really does propose it, I cannot say No to what will be so kindly intended. It could be but for a few days, however, as my mother would be quite disappointed by my exceeding the fortnight which I now talk of as the outside—at least, we could not both remain longer away comfortably.

The middle of July is Martha's time, as far as she has any time. She has left it to Mrs. Craven to fix the day. I wish she could get her money paid, for I fear her going at all depends upon that.

Instead of Bath the Deans Dundases have taken a house at Clifton—Richmond Terrace—and she is as glad of the change as even you and I should be, or almost. She will now be able to go on from Berks and visit them without any fears from heat.

This post has brought me a letter from Miss Sharpe. Poor thing! she as been suffering indeed, but is now in a comparative state of comfort. She is at Sir W. P.'s, in Yorkshire, with the children, and there is no appearance of her quitting them.

Of course we lose the pleasure of seeing her here. She writes highly of Sir Wm. I do so want him to marry her. There is a Dow. Lady P. presiding there to make it all right. The *Man* is the same ; but she does not mention what he is by profession or trade. She does not think Lady P. was privy to his scheme on her, but, on being in his power, yielded. Oh, Sir Wm.! Sir Wm.! how I will love you if you will love Miss Sharp !

Mrs. Driver, &c., are off by Collier, but so near being too late that she had not time to call and leave the keys herself. I have them, however. I suppose one is the key of the linen-press, but I do not know what to guess the other.

The coach was stopped at the blacksmith's, and they came running down with Triggs and Browning, and trunks, and birdcages. Quite amusing.

My mother desires her love, and hopes to hear from you.

Yours very affectionately, J. Austen.

Frank and Mary are to have Mary Goodchild to help as *Under* till they can get a cook. *She* is delighted to go.

Best love at Streatham.

Miss Austen, Henrietta St.
By favour of Mr. Gray.

LXXV.

23 Hans Place: Tuesday morning (August, 1814).

My dear Cassandra,

I had a very good journey, not crowded, two of the three taken up at Bentley being children, the others of a reasonable size; and they were all very quiet and civil. We were late in London, from being a great load, and from changing coaches at Farnham; it was nearly four, I believe, when we reached Sloane Street. Henry himself met me, and as soon as my trunk and basket could be routed out from all the other trunks and baskets in the world, we were on our way to Hans Place in the luxury of a nice, large, cool, dirty hackney coach.

There were four in the kitchen part of Yalden, and I was told fifteen at top, among them Percy Benn. We met in the same room at Egham, but poor Percy was not in his usual spirits. He would be more chatty, I dare say, in his way *from* Woolwich. We took up a young Gibson at Holybourn, and, in short, everybody either *did* come up by Yalden yesterday, or wanted to come up. It put me in mind of my own coach between Edinburgh and Stirling.

Henry is very well, and has given me an account of the Canterbury races, which seem to have been as pleasant as one could wish. Everything went well. Fanny had good partners, Mr. —— was her second on Thursday, but he did not dance with her any more.

This will content you for the present. I must just add, however, that there were no Lady Charlottes, they were gone off to Kirby, and that Mary Oxenden, instead of dying, is going to marry Wm. Hammond.

No James and Edward yet. Our evening yesterday was perfectly quiet; we only talked a little to Mr. Tilson across the intermediate gardens; *she* was gone out airing with Miss Burdett. It is a delightful place—more than answers my expectation. Having got rid of my unreasonable ideas, I find more space and comfort in the rooms than I had supposed, and the garden is quite a love. I am in the front attic, which is the bedchamber to be preferred.

Henry wants you to see it all, and asked whether you would return with him from Hampshire; I encouraged him to think you would. He breakfasts here early, and then rides to Henrietta St. If it continues fine John is to drive me

there by-and-bye, and we shall take an airing together; and I do not mean to take any other exercise, for I feel a little tired after my long jumble. I live in his room downstairs; it is particularly pleasant from opening upon the garden. I go and refresh myself every now and then, and then come back to solitary coolness. There is *one* maidservant only, a very creditable, clean-looking young woman. Richard remains for the present.

Wednesday morning.—My brother and Edwd. arrived last night. They could not get places the day before. Their business is about teeth and wigs, and they are going after breakfast to Scarman's and Tavistock St., and they are to return to go with me afterwards in the barouche. I hope to do some of my errands to-day.

I got the willow yesterday, as Henry was not quite ready when I reached Hena. St. I saw Mr. Hampson there for a moment. He dines here to-morrow and proposed bringing his son; so I must submit to seeing George Hampson, though I had hoped to go through life without it. It was one of my vanities, like your not reading 'Patronage.'

After leaving H. St. we drove to Mrs. Latouche's; *they* are always at home, and they are

to dine here on Friday. We could do no more, as it began to rain.

We dine at half-past four to-day, that our visitors may go to the play, and Henry and I are to spend the evening with the Tilsons, to meet Miss Burdett, who leaves town to-morrow. Mrs. T. called on me yesterday.

Is not this all that can have happened or been arranged? Not quite. Henry wants me to see more of his Hanwell favourite, and has written to invite her to spend a day or two here with me. His scheme is to fetch her on Saturday. I am more and more convinced that he will marry again soon, and like the idea of *her* better than of anybody else, at hand.

Now, I have breakfasted and have the room to myself again. It is likely to be a fine day. How do you all do?

Henry talks of being at Chawton *about* the 1st. of Sept. He has once mentioned a scheme, which I should rather like—calling on the Birches and the Crutchleys in our way. It may never come to anything, but I must provide for the possibility by troubling you to send up my silk pelisse by Collier on Saturday. I feel it would be necessary on such an occasion; and be so good as to put up

a clean dressing-gown which will come from the wash on Friday. You need not direct it to be left anywhere. It may take its chance.

We are to call for Henry between three and four, and I must finish this and carry it with me, as he is not always there in the morning before the parcel is made up. And, before I set off, I must return Mrs. Tilson's visit. I hear nothing of the Hoblyns, and abstain from all enquiry.

I hope Mary Jane and Frank's gardens go on well. Give my love to them all—Nunna Hat's love to George. A great many people wanted to run up in the Poach as well as me. The wheat looked very well all the way, and James says the same of *his* road.

The same good account of Mrs. C.'s health continues, and her circumstances mend. She gets farther and farther from poverty. What a comfort! Good-bye to you.

Yours very truly and affectionately, JANE.

All well at Steventon. I hear nothing particular of Ben, except that Edward is to get him some pencils.

Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favour of Mr. Gray.

1815

I GLEAN no information concerning 'Aunt Jane' from my mother's pocket-books of the first nine months of the year 1815, save the record of various letters written to and received from her. In October Henry Austen was seized with a severe illness, in which Jane came to nurse him at his house in London, 23 Hans Place, and I find that on the 23rd of that month my mother writes: 'An express arrived from Aunt Jane Austen with a sad account of poor Uncle Henry. Papa set off for town directly.' Then follows a daily bulletin, and in about a week is chronicled the fact that the Godmersham household 'sent a basket of provisions to them, and wrote to Aunt Jane.' Godmersham provisions, aided possibly by London doctors, had their due effect. The patient rallied, gradually improved, was well enough for his brother to return home again in a week's time, and got so much better as time went on that on November 15 occurs the entry, 'Papa and I set off early, and reached Hans Place to dinner. Aunts Cass and Jane are here.' On the 20th Mr.

Knight and Cassandra Austen went to Chawton, and on the 24th was written our first letter of this year (No. 76). Mr. Haden, I suppose, was one of Henry Austen's medical attendants, apparently an apothecary, by the playful manner in which Jane vehemently protests that he is no such thing. Whether apothecary or physician, however, the worthy man seems to have made a favourable impression upon both aunt and niece, for my mother records (November 20) that 'Mr. Haden, a delightful, clever, musical Haden, comes every evening, and is agreeable,' and Jane, with the exception of a doubt as to the orthodoxy of the gentleman's opinion of the infallible wickedness of non-musical people, evidently shared this view of his character. During their stay in town my mother writes that 'Aunt Jane and I walk every day in the garden, but get no further.' 'Aunt Jane and I drove about shopping,' and similar entries, varied one evening as follows, 'Aunt Jane and I very snug,' which shows how thoroughly the two enjoyed and appreciated each other's society. Like all pleasant things, this visit came to an end, and the Godmersham party returned into Kent on December 8. Several letters are entered in the pocket-books as

having been written and received before the end of the year, but none of these are to hand, and this is the more to be regretted because my mother was in the habit of keeping the letters of so many of her correspondents through life, that it is difficult to imagine how these came to be destroyed. The visit to Keppel Street (Letter 77) must have been to her brother Charles, whose first wife, Fanny Palmer, had just died, which accounts for 'Fanny' being 'very much affected by the sight of the children.' The celebrated Mr. Haden appears to have preferred 'Mansfield Park' to 'Pride and Prejudice,' but perhaps he changed his opinion when he had read them both over again. The 'P. R.' mentioned in these 1815 letters must not be mistaken for the 'Prize Ring,' for which it sometimes stands, but with which our Jane had certainly nothing to do. The 'Prince Regent' is signified, who had been graciously pleased to express his approval of 'Mansfield Park,' and directed his librarian, Mr. Clarke, to invite Jane to Carlton House, where she was informed that she might dedicate her forthcoming novel to His Royal Highness. Mr. Austen Leigh gives us a short correspondence between Jane and Mr. Clarke, which is

so characteristic of her, that I venture to insert it in my Appendix. The Countess of Morley had also written a letter, which perhaps ought to appear in the same place, as Jane alludes to its receipt in the concluding paragraph of the seventy-seventh letter. The letter of 1816 is the latest I have. It was written on September 8th, just ten months before her death, when Cassandra was staying at Cheltenham. It will be observed that she refers to 'the pain in my back,' speaks of 'nursing myself into as beautiful a state as I can,' and shows some disinclination to 'company' in the house; but the letter is otherwise written in her usual cheerful style, and there are several amusing passages. I imagine that after Cassandra's return from Cheltenham the sisters were hardly separated again, so that this is in all probability one of the very last letters which passed between them.

One, and only one, more meeting took place between the aunt and niece who loved each other so well. I find from the pocket-books that on May 2, 1816, my mother accompanied her father to Chawton and remained until the 21st, when they returned to Kent. The usual meetings occurred between the 'Great House' and the 'Cottage,' but

no special event is related, and one can only fancy how in after days my mother must have recalled this last time of confidential and loving intercourse with one who had become so very dear to her, and with whom she shared every secret of her heart. Jane was at this time in declining health, though no one anticipated that she was to be spared to her family only for one more short year. She wrote frequently to my mother after this visit, entered thoroughly into all her views and feelings, and in fact only ceased the correspondence when health and strength began rapidly to fail.

LXXVI.

Hans Place: Friday (Nov. 24).

My dearest Cassandra,

I have the pleasure of sending you a much better account of *my affairs*, which I know will be a great delight to you.

I wrote to Mr. Murray yesterday myself, and Henry wrote at the same time to Roworth. Before the notes were out of the house, I received three sheets and an apology from R. We sent the notes, however, and I had a most civil one in reply from

Mr. M. He is so very polite, indeed, that it is quite overcoming. The printers have been waiting for paper—the blame is thrown upon the stationer; but he gives his word that I shall have no farther cause for dissatisfaction. He has lent us *Miss Williams* and *Scott*, and says that any book of his will always be at *my* service. In short, I am soothed and complimented into tolerable comfort.

We had a visit yesterday from Edwd. Knight, and Mr. Mascall joined him here; and this morning has brought Mr. Mascall's compliments and two pheasants. We have some hope of Edward's coming to dinner to-day; he will, if he can, I believe. He is looking extremely well.

To-morrow Mr. Haden is to dine with us. There is happiness! We really grow so fond of Mr. Haden that I do not know what to expect. He, and Mr. Tilson, and Mr. Philips made up our circle of wits last night; Fanny played, and he sat and listened and suggested improvements, till Richard came in to tell him that 'the doctor was waiting for him at Captn. Blake's;' and then he was off with a speed that you can imagine. He never does appear in the least above his profession, or out of humour with it, or I should think poor Captn. Blake, whoever he is, in a very bad way.

I must have misunderstood Henry when I told you that *you* were to hear from him to-day. He read me what he wrote to Edward: part of it must have amused him, I am sure one part, alas! cannot be very amusing to anybody. I wonder that with such business to worry him he can be getting better, but he certainly does gain strength, and if you and Edwd. were to see him now I feel sure that you would think him improved since Monday.

He was out yesterday; it was a fine sunshiny day *here* (in the country perhaps you might have clouds and fogs. Dare I say so? I shall not deceive *you*, if I do, as to my estimation of the climate of London), and he ventured first on the balcony and then as far as the greenhouse. He caught no cold, and therefore has done more to-day, with great delight and self-persuasion of improvement.

He has been to see Mrs. Tilson and the Malings. By-the-bye, you may talk to Mr. T. of his wife's being better; I saw her yesterday, and was sensible of her having gained ground in the last two days.

Evening.—We have had no Edward. Our circle is formed—only Mr. Tilson and Mr. Haden. We are not so happy as we were. A message came

this afternoon from Mrs. Latouche and Miss East, offering themselves to drink tea with us to-morrow, and, as it was accepted, here is an end of our extreme felicity in our dinner guest. I am heartily sorry they are coming; it will be an evening spoilt to Fanny and me.

Another little disappointment: Mr. H. advises Henry's *not* venturing with us in the carriage to-morrow; if it were spring, he says, it would be a different thing. One would rather this had not been. He seems to think his going out to-day rather imprudent, though acknowledging at the same time that he is better than he was in the morning.

Fanny has had a letter full of commissions from Goodnestone; we shall be busy about them and her own matters, I dare say, from 12 to 4. Nothing I trust will keep us from Keppel Street.

This day has brought a most friendly letter from Mr. Fowle, with a brace of pheasants. I did not know before that Henry had written to him a few days ago to ask for them. We shall live upon pheasants—no bad life!

I send you five one-pound notes, for fear you should be distressed for little money. Lizzy's work is charmingly done; shall you put it to your

chintz? A *sheet* came in this moment; 1st and 3rd vols. are now at 144; 2nd at 48. I am sure you will like particulars. We are not to have the trouble of returning the sheets to Mr. Murray any longer, the printer's boys bring and carry.

I hope Mary continues to get well fast, and I send my love to little Herbert. You will tell me more of Martha's plans, of course, when you write again. Remember me most kindly to everybody, and Miss Benn besides.

Yours very affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

I have been listening to dreadful insanity. It is Mr. Haden's firm belief that a person *not* musical is fit for every sort of wickedness. I ventured to assert a little on the other side, but wished the cause in abler hands.

Miss Austen, Chawton.

LXXVII.

Hans Place: Sunday (Nov. 26).

MY DEAREST,

The parcel arrived safely, and I am much obliged to you for your trouble. It cost 2*s.* 10*d.*, but, as there is a certain saving of 2*s.* 4½*d.* on the other side, I am sure it is well worth doing. I

send four pair of silk stockings, but I do not want them washed at present. In the three neckhandkerchiefs I include the one sent down before. These things, perhaps, Edwd. may be able to bring, but even if he is not, I am extremely pleased with his returning to you from Steventon. It is much better; far preferable.

I *did* mention the P. R. in my note to Mr. Murray; it brought me a fine compliment in return. Whether it has done any other good I do not know, but Henry thought it worth trying.

The printers continue to supply me very well. I am advanced in Vol. III. to my *arra*-root, upon which peculiar style of spelling there is a modest query in the margin. I will not forget Anna's arrowroot. I hope you have told Martha of my first resolution of letting nobody know that I *might* dedicate, &c., for fear of being obliged to do it, and that she is thoroughly convinced of my being influenced now by nothing but the most mercenary motives. I have paid nine shillings on her account to Miss Palmer; there was no more owing.

Well, we were very busy all yesterday; from half-past 11 till 4 in the streets, working almost entirely for other people, driving from place to place after a parcel for Sandling, which we could

never find, and encountering the miseries of Grafton House to get a purple frock for Eleanor Bridges. We got to Keppel St., however, which was all I cared for, and though we could stay only a quarter-of-an-hour, Fanny's calling gave great pleasure, and her sensibility still greater, for she was very much affected at the sight of the children. Poor little F. looked heavy. We saw the whole party.

Aunt Harriet hopes Cassy will not forget to make a pincushion for Mrs. Kelly, as *she* has spoken of its being promised her several times. I hope we shall see Aunt H. and the dear little girls here on Thursday.

So much for the morning. Then came the dinner and Mr. Haden, who brought good manners and clever conversation. From 7 to 8 the harp; at 8 Mrs. L. and Miss E. arrived, and for the rest of the evening the drawing-room was thus arranged: on the sofa side the two ladies, Henry, and myself, making the best of it; on the opposite side Fanny and Mr. Haden, in two chairs (I *believe*, at least, they had *two* chairs), talking together uninterruptedly. Fancy the scene! And what is to be fancied next? Why, that Mr. H. dines here again to-morrow. To-day we are to

have Mr. Barlow. Mr. H. is reading 'Mansfield Park' for the first time, and prefers it to P. and P.

A hare and four rabbits from Gm. yesterday, so that we are stocked for nearly a week. Poor Farmer Andrews! I am very sorry for him, and sincerely wish his recovery.

A better account of the sugar than I could have expected. I should like to help you break some more. I am glad you cannot wake early; I am sure you must have been under great arrears of rest.

Fanny and I have been to B. Chapel, and walked back with Maria Cuthbert. We have been very little plagued with visitors this last week. I remember only Miss Herries, the aunt, but I am in terror for to-day, a fine bright Sunday; plenty of mortar, and nothing to do.

Henry gets out in his garden every day, but at present his inclination for doing more seems over, nor has he now any plan for leaving London before Dec. 18, when he thinks of going to Oxford for a few days; to-day, indeed, his feelings are for continuing where he is through the next two months.

One knows the uncertainty of all this, but, should it be so, we must think the best, and hope

the best, and do the best; and my idea in that case is, that when *he* goes to Oxford *I* should go home, and have nearly a week of you before *you* take my place. This is only a silent project, you know, to be gladly given up if better things occur. Henry calls himself stronger every day, and Mr. H. keeps on approving his pulse, which seems generally better than ever, but still they will not let him be well. Perhaps when Fanny is gone he will be allowed to recover faster.

I am not disappointed: I never thought the little girl at Wyards very pretty, but she will have a fine complexion and curly hair, and pass for a beauty. We are glad the mamma's cold has not been worse, and send her our love and good wishes by every convenient opportunity. Sweet, amiable Frank! why does *he* have a cold too? Like Captain Mirvan to Mr. Duval,[1] 'I wish it well over with him.'

Fanny has heard all that I have said to you about herself and Mr. H. Thank you very much for the sight of dearest Charles's letter to yourself. How pleasantly and how naturally he writes! and how perfect a picture of his disposition and feelings his style conveys! Poor dear fellow! Not a present!

[1] Characters in Miss Burney's 'Evelina.'

I have a great mind to send him all the twelve copies which were to have been dispersed among my near connections, beginning with the P. R. and ending with Countess Morley. Adieu.

Yours affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

Give my love to Cassy and Mary Jane. Caroline will be gone when this reaches you.

Miss Austen.

LXXVIII.

Hans Place: Saturday (Dec. 2).

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

Henry came back yesterday, and might have returned the day before if he had known as much in time. I had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. T. on Wednesday night that Mr. Seymour thought there was not the least occasion for his absenting himself any longer.

I had also the comfort of a few lines on Wednesday morning from Henry himself, just after your letter was gone, giving so good an account of his feelings as made me perfectly easy. He met with the utmost care and attention at Hanwell, spent his two days there very quietly and pleasantly, and, being certainly in no respect the worse for going, we may believe that he must be better, as he

is quite sure of being himself. To make his return a complete gala Mr. Haden was secured for dinner. I need not say that our evening was agreeable.

But you seem to be under a mistake as to Mr. H. You call him an apothecary. He is no apothecary; he has never been an apothecary; there is not an apothecary in this neighbourhood—the only inconvenience of the situation perhaps—but so it is; we have not a medical man within reach. He is a Haden, nothing but a Haden, a sort of wonderful nondescript creature on two legs, something between a man and an angel, but without the least spice of an apothecary. He is, perhaps, the only person *not* an apothecary hereabouts. He has never sung to us. He will not sing without a pianoforte accompaniment.

Mr. Meyers gives his three lessons a week, altering his days and his hours, however, just as he chooses, never very punctual, and never giving good measure. I have not Fanny's fondness for masters, and Mr. Meyers does not give me any longing after them. The truth is, I think, that they are all, at least music-masters, made of too much consequence and allowed to take too many liberties with their scholars' time.

We shall be delighted to see Edward on

Monday, only sorry that you must be losing him. A turkey will be equally welcome with himself. He must prepare for his own proper bedchamber here, as Henry moved down to the one below last week; he found the other cold.

I am sorry my mother has been suffering, and am afraid this exquisite weather is too good to agree with her. *I* enjoy it all over me, from top to toe, from right to left, longitudinally, perpendicularly, diagonally; and I cannot but selfishly hope we are to have it last till Christmas—nice, unwholesome, unseasonable, relaxing, close, muggy weather.

Oh, thank you very much for your long letter; it did me a great deal of good. Henry accepts your offer of making his nine gallon of mead thankfully. The mistake of the dogs rather vexed him for a moment, but he has not thought of it since. To-day he makes a third attempt at his strengthening plaister, and, as I am sure he will now be getting out a great deal, it is to be wished that he may be able to keep it on. He sets off this morning by the Chelsea coach to sign bonds and visit Henrietta St., and I have no doubt will be going every day to Henrietta St.

Fanny and I were very snug by ourselves as

soon as we were satisfied about our invalid's being safe at Hanwell. By manœuvring and good luck we foiled all the Malings' attempts upon us. Happily I caught a little cold on Wednesday, the morning we were in town, which we made very useful, and we saw nobody but our precious [1] and Mr. Tilson.

This evening the Malings are allowed to drink tea with us. We are in hopes—that is, we *wish*—Miss Palmer and the little girls may come this morning. You know, of course, that she could *not* come on Thursday, and she will not attempt to *name* any other day.

God bless you. Excuse the shortness of this, but I must finish it now that I may save you 2*d*. Best love.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

It strikes me that I have no business to give the P. R. a binding, but we will take counsel upon the question.

I am glad you have put the flounce on your chintz; I am sure it must look particularly well, and it is what I had thought of.

Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.

[1] Probably a playful allusion to Mr. Haden.

1816

LXXIX.

Chawton: Sunday (Sept. 8).

My dearest Cassandra,

I have borne the arrival of your letter to-day extremely well; anybody might have thought it was giving me pleasure. I am very glad you find so much to be satisfied with at Cheltenham. While the waters agree, everything else is trifling.

A letter arrived for you from Charles last Thursday. They are all safe and pretty well in Keppel St., the children decidedly better for Broadstairs; and he writes principally to ask when it will be convenient to us to receive Miss P., the little girls, and himself. They would be ready to set off in ten days from the time of his writing, to pay their visits in Hampshire and Berkshire, and he would prefer coming to Chawton *first*.

I have answered him, and said that we hoped it might suit them to wait till the *last* week in Septr., as we could not ask them sooner, either on your account or the want of room. I mentioned the 23rd as the probable day of your return. When you have once left Cheltenham I shall grudge

every half-day wasted on the road. If there were but a coach from Hungerford to Chawton! I have desired him to let me hear again soon.

He does not include a maid in the list to be accommodated, but if they bring one, as I suppose they will, we shall have no bed in the house even then for Charles himself—let alone Henry. But what can we do?

We shall have the Gt. House quite at our command; it is to be cleared of the Papillons' servants in a day or two. They themselves have been hurried off into Essex to take possession—not of a large estate left them by an uncle—but to scrape together all they can, I suppose, of the effects of a Mrs. Rawstorn, a rich old friend and cousin, suddenly deceased, to whom they are joint executors. So there is a happy end of the Kentish Papillons coming here.

No morning service to-day, wherefore I am writing between twelve and one o'clock. Mr. Benn in the afternoon, and likewise more rain again, by the look and the sound of things. You left us in doubt of Mrs. Benn's situation, but she has bespoke her nurse. Mrs. F. A. seldom either looks or appears quite well. Little Embryo is troublesome, I suppose. They dined with us

yesterday, and had fine weather both for coming and going home, which has hardly ever happened to them before. She is still unprovided with a housemaid.

Our day at Alton was very pleasant, venison quite right, children well-behaved, and Mr. and Mrs. Digweed taking kindly to our charades and other games. I must also observe, for his mother's satisfaction, that Edward at my suggestion devoted himself very properly to the entertainment of Miss S. Gibson. Nothing was wanting except Mr. Sweeney, but he, alas! had been ordered away to London the day before. We had a beautiful walk home by moonlight.

Thank you, my back has given me scarcely any pain for many days. I have an idea that agitation does it as much harm as fatigue, and that I was ill at the time of your going from the very circumstance of your going. I am nursing myself up now into as beautiful a state as I can, because I hear that Dr. White means to call on me before he leaves the country.

Evening.—Frank and Mary and the children visited us this morning. Mr. and Mrs. Gibson are to come on the 23rd, and there is too much reason to fear they will stay above a week. Little George

could tell me where you were gone to, as well as what you were to bring him, when I asked him the other day.

Sir Tho. Miller is dead. I treat you with a dead baronet in almost every letter.

So you have C. Craven among you, as well as the Duke of Orleans and Mr. Pocock. But it mortifies me that *you* have not added one to the stock of common acquaintance. Do pray meet with somebody belonging to yourself. I am quite weary of your knowing nobody.

Mrs. Digweed parts with both Hannah and old cook; the former will not give up her lover, who is a man of bad character; the latter is guilty only of being unequal to anything.

Miss Terry was to have spent this week with her sister, but as usual it is put off. My amiable friend knows the value of her company. I have not seen Anna since the day you left us; her father and brother visited her most days. Edward and Ben called here on Thursday. Edward was in his way to Selborne. We found him very agreeable. He is come back from France, thinking of the French as one could wish—disappointed in everything. He did not go beyond Paris.

I have a letter from Mrs. Perigord; she and her mother are in London again. She speaks of France as a scene of general poverty and misery: no money, no trade, nothing to be got but by the innkeepers, and as to her own present prospects she is not much less melancholy than before.

I have also a letter from Miss Sharp, quite one of her letters; she has been again obliged to exert herself more than ever, in a more distressing, more harassed state, and has met with another excellent old physician and his wife, with every virtue under heaven, who takes to her and cures her from pure love and benevolence. Dr. and Mrs. Storer are *their* Mrs. and Miss Palmer—for they are at Bridlington. I am happy to say, however, that the sum of the account is better than usual. Sir William is returned; from Bridlington they go to Chevet, and she *is* to have a young governess under her.

I enjoyed Edward's company very much, as I said before, and yet I was not sorry when Friday came. It had been a busy week, and I wanted a few days quiet and exemption from the thought and contrivancy which any sort of company gives. I often wonder how *you* can find time for what you do, in addition to the care of the house; and how good Mrs. West could have written such

books and collected so many hard words, with all her family cares, is still more a matter of astonishment. Composition seems to me impossible with a head full of joints of mutton and doses of rhubarb.

Monday.—Here is a sad morning. I fear you may not have been able to get to the Pump. The two last days were very pleasant. I enjoyed them the more for your sake. But to-day it is really bad enough to make you all cross. I hope Mary will change her lodgings at the fortnight's end; I am sure, if you looked about well, you would find others in some odd corner to suit you better. Mrs. Potter charges for the *name* of the High St.

Success to the pianoforte! I trust it will drive you away. We hear now that there is to be *no honey* this year. Bad news for us. We must husband our present stock of mead, and I am sorry to perceive that our twenty gallons is very nearly out. I cannot comprehend how the fourteen gallons could last so long.

We do not much like Mr. Cooper's new sermons. They are fuller of regeneration and conversion than ever, with the addition of his zeal in the cause of the Bible Society.

Martha's love to Mary and Caroline, and she is extremely glad to find they like the pelisse. The

Debarys are indeed odious! We are to see my brother to-morrow, but for only one night. I had no idea that he would care for the races *without* Edward. Remember me to all.

Yours very affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

Miss Austen, Post Office, Cheltenham.

1814–1816

I CONFESS to having entertained some doubts as to the publication of the five letters addressed by 'Aunt Jane' to my mother in 1814–16—doubts not so much as to the propriety of their publication as to the possible dislike which some of my own family might feel at the dragging to light of items of private history which, seventy years ago, were no doubt secret and sacred to both the writer and the recipient of the letters which contain them. But two considerations have weighed with me above all others, and I trust they will be deemed sufficient, even if the lapse of time since the letters were written did not in itself remove every reasonable objection. The one consideration is that, as regards Jane herself, these five letters are peculiarly interesting, not only because in

every line they are vividly characteristic of the writer, but because they differ from all the preceding letters in that they are written, not to an elder sister, but to a niece who constantly sought her advice and sympathy, and whom she addressed, of course, in a different manner, and from a different standpoint. The other and, naturally, to me a consideration even more important, is that, according to my humble judgment, these letters, whilst they illustrate the character of my great-aunt, cannot, when explained, do otherwise than reflect credit upon that of my beloved mother ; whilst they prove the great and affectionate intimacy which existed between her and her aunt, and incidentally demonstrate the truth of a remark in one of Cassandra's letters that there were many points of similitude in the characters of the two. If my mother had preserved more of the thirty or forty letters which she received from 'Aunt Jane' during the years 1814–16, it might have been possible for me, if it seemed desirable, to eliminate the portions which related to her own 'love affairs,' and to still obtain the illustrations of Jane Austen's character which her letters to a niece specially afford when compared with her letters to a sister.

I am not sure, however, that such an elimination would not have, to a great extent, spoiled, or at least diminished, the interest of the letters; and, when it became a question of omitting altogether these five letters, I thought that their interest was so great that I could not persuade myself to do so. After all the story is very simple, and one which can offend or injure nobody by its relation. My mother was a handsome and agreeable young woman, fond of society, and endowed with a large portion of practical common sense. A friendship sprang up between her and a gentleman of about her own age, whose name it is unnecessary for me to mention. He was a man of high character, the two saw much of each other, and the friendship ripened into an attachment which very nearly became an engagement. There was, however, one point of difference which stood in the way, and prevented this result. The gentleman was of a very serious disposition, and eventually his religious views induced him to think dancing and other social amusements of the same sort things which ought to be eschewed and avoided by Christian people. My mother was of a different opinion. I do not suppose there ever was a woman more

profoundly and really religious; throughout the whole of her life she attended assiduously to her religious duties, never a day passed that she did not devote some portion of it to the perusal of some pious author (which she called 'reading my goodness'), and no one ever strove more earnestly to do her duty and to follow the teaching of the Gospel. But she entertained a strong opinion that this might be done without a severance from the ordinary pursuits and amusements of other people; that a person might live 'in the world' without being 'of the world,' and that to perform the duties which came before her in life, and set a practical example of a Christian life in her every-day existence, was as likely to be acceptable to God as the withdrawal from pursuits in which everybody else indulged, as if a Christian's duty required that he should live apart from other people, by which means his influence over them for good must of necessity be diminished. From the entries in her diary, as well as from the letters before me, it is evident that about this time a struggle went on in my mother's mind upon these points. 'Plagued myself about Methodists all day,' and 'had a nice conversation with Mr. Sherer about

Methodists,' are entries in the autumn of 1814, which evidently bear upon the matter, while other entries throughout this and the early part of the following year testify to the fact that she entertained a strong regard for the gentleman, but that she was in the position which many young women have been in before and since—namely, doubtful whether she cared enough for him to become his wife. This doubt became a certainty in 1815, and I find at the end of her pocket-book for that year, in her usual summary of the principal events of the year, that there were 'many serious discussions and vexatious circumstances on serious subjects tending nearly to dissolve the intimacy between —— and myself.' I cannot more aptly illustrate my mother's real feelings upon these matters which she speaks of as 'serious' than by a quotation from a letter to her from my father before they were married, which appears to me to speak, in the stronger language of a man, that which was in her woman's heart. It so happened that immediately after they became engaged my father was summoned to Lincolnshire upon affairs arising out of the death of Sir Joseph Banks, and obliged to be away for more than a fortnight, during which time

he wrote daily to my mother, who preserved all these letters—interesting mementoes to her children. In one of them, answering some remarks and enquiries of his correspondent, he writes as follows:—'In all that I have had to undergo I have been supported by that Power from above without whose aid I must long ago have sunk; but, seriously as I have always regarded every occurrence of life, and attributing as I always do everything that happens to a superintending Power, I have never suffered these considerations to interfere with the duties or even the amusements of life. I have never felt that it could become me to find fault with the conduct of others, and dogmatically prescribe what course it is best to pursue. To act upon a steady and uniform principle, to adhere to what is right and to abstain from what is wrong, to afford the best example in my power, never to obtrude my opinions, but never upon proper occasions to be ashamed or afraid of avowing them—these have been the rules upon which I have acted, and I believe they will bring peace at the last. I dislike everything that savours of levity in matters of religion, and much more do I dislike that affected and presumptuous vanity which

dares to censure the innocent amusements of life—which secludes people from the common enjoyments necessary to the comfort of society, and which, clothed in puritanical hypocrisy, affects a superiority to which it has no claim whatever. These are serious subjects; you first mentioned them to me, and I love you too well not to tell you without hesitation what I think and feel. Your own principles as expressed to me are right—grounded on humility, admitting how unequal we are to perform our duties, but resolutely and constantly persevering to the utmost of our ability to discharge them properly—thinking seriously of everything that happens, constantly mixing with the world, but enjoying it more or less according as we meet with similar feelings and kindred spirits, and always hoping that our example and principles will effect some good and receive the respect to which they are entitled.' It was necessary to the elucidation of these five letters that this insight into my mother's affairs should be given; her feelings may be gathered from 'Aunt Jane's' remarks upon them, and I might close these prefatory observations by saying that this difference upon 'serious subjects' *did* overcome my mother's

regard for the gentleman in question, that the 'intimacy' *was* 'dissolved,' and within a couple of years he found his happiness elsewhere. I am unable, however, to avoid another quotation from one of my father's letters in 1820, which evidences the frank, fearless, open nature which, in common with 'Aunt Jane,' my mother possessed. He writes: 'I will now reply to that part of your letter which relates to Mr. ——. Our meeting, my dearest Fanny, in the library at Godmersham on Friday fortnight we can neither of us ever forget—within ten minutes you mentioned to me the circumstances of this attachment. Of course I felt surprised till you told me all, and *then* I felt still more surprised, and happy beyond what I can declare, at having, as it were at once, developed to me a mind capable of expressing what I do not believe any other woman in the world would have had courage, or firmness, or candour, or sense enough to have mentioned. Let me say that my esteem for you is not of very recent date, but I hardly know of anything that has raised you higher in my opinion than your frank and sensible avowal in this instance. I would not say this if it were not true, and that you well know.'

The meeting in the library at Godmersham was, of course, that at which my father and mother became engaged, and with the hatred of concealment which was a part of her character, she evidently told him at once and fully of the past, and by so doing confirmed and strengthened his confidence in herself for the future.

The first two of these letters were written in November 1814, one from Chawton and the other from Hans Place; they speak for themselves, and comment would only weaken their effect. The visit to Hendon (mentioned in the second letter) was to 'Anna Lefroy,' *née* Austen, and the Mr. Hayter mentioned in the same letter was the same who was afterwards for many years Patronage Secretary of the Treasury in several Liberal Governments.

The third letter, written in February 1816, may perhaps require a word of explanation. There are two gentlemen therein referred to, one whom Jane believes determined to marry her niece, the other (the hero of the former letters) for whom she suspects that 'sweet, perverse Fanny' has still some regard, which she no longer endeavours to rekindle and strengthen, but

to lessen and extinguish. The first gentleman is again referred to in the next letter, before writing which Jane seems to have discovered that her niece's peril of matrimony was not so imminent as she had supposed: she considers upon the whole that Mr. —— '*cannot* be in love with you, however he may try at it,' and exhorts her niece not to be 'in a hurry'—'the right man is sure to come at last.' He did come, but unfortunately not until the grave had closed for three years over the aunt who took such a warm and lively interest in all that concerned her niece, and who would have sincerely and heartily rejoiced could she have seen her in the position which she so long and so worthily occupied.

LXXX.

Chawton: Friday (Nov. 18, 1814).

I feel quite as doubtful as you could be, my dearest Fanny, as to *when* my letter may be finished, for I can command very little quiet time at present; but yet I must begin, for I know you will be glad to hear as soon as possible, and I really am impatient myself to be writing something on so

very interesting a subject, though I have no hope of writing anything to the purpose. I shall do very little more, I dare say, than say over again what you have said before.

I was certainly a good deal surprised *at first*, as I had no suspicion of any change in your feelings, and I have no scruple in saying that you cannot be in love. My dear Fanny, I am ready to laugh at the idea, and yet it is no laughing matter to have had you so mistaken as to your own feelings. And with all my heart I wish I had cautioned you on that point when first you spoke to me; but, though I did not think you then *much* in love, I did consider you as being attached in a degree quite sufficiently for happiness, as I had no doubt it would increase with opportunity, and from the time of our being in London together I thought you really very much in love. But you certainly are not at all—there is no concealing it.

What strange creatures we are! It seems as if your being secure of him had made you indifferent. There was a little disgust, I suspect, at the races, and I do not wonder at it. His expressions then would not do for one who had rather more acuteness, penetration, and taste, than love, which was your case. And yet, after all, I *am* surprised that

the change in your feelings should be so great. He is just what he ever was, only more evidently and uniformly devoted to *you*. This is all the difference. How shall we account for it?

My dearest Fanny, I am writing what will not be of the smallest use to you. I am feeling differently every moment, and shall not be able to suggest a single thing that can assist your mind. I could lament in one sentence and laugh in the next, but as to opinion or counsel I am sure that none will be extracted worth having from this letter.

I read yours through the very evening I received it, getting away by myself. I could not bear to leave off when I had once begun. I was full of curiosity and concern. Luckily your At. C. dined at the other house; therefore I had not to manœuvre away from *her*, and as to anybody else, I do not care.

Poor dear Mr. A.! Oh, dear Fanny! your mistake has been one that thousands of women fall into. He was the *first* young man who attached himself to you. That was the charm, and most powerful it is. Among the multitudes, however, that make the same mistake with yourself, there can be few indeed who have so little reason to

regret it; *his* character and *his* attachment leave you nothing to be ashamed of.

Upon the whole, what is to be done? You have no inclination for any other person. His situation in life, family, friends, and, above all, his character, his uncommonly amiable mind, strict principles, just notions, good habits, *all* that *you* know so well how to value, *all* that is really of the first importance,—everything of this nature pleads his cause most strongly. You have no doubt of his having superior abilities, he has proved it at the University; he is, I dare say, such a scholar as your agreeable, idle brothers would ill bear a comparison with.

Oh, my dear Fanny! the more I write about him the warmer my feelings become—the more strongly I feel the sterling worth of such a young man and the desirableness of your growing in love with him again. I recommend this most thoroughly. There *are* such beings in the world, perhaps one in a thousand, as the creature you and I should think perfection, where grace and spirit are united to worth, where the manners are equal to the heart and understanding, but such a person may not come in your way, or, if he does, he may not be the eldest son of a man of fortune, the near rela-

tion of your particular friend and belonging to your own county.

Think of all this, Fanny. Mr. A. has advantages which we do not often meet in one person. His only fault, indeed, seems modesty. If he were less modest he would be more agreeable, speak louder, and look impudenter; and is not it a fine character of which modesty is the only defect? I have no doubt he will get more lively and more like yourselves as he is more with you; he will catch your ways if he belongs to you. And, as to there being any objection from his *goodness*, from the danger of his becoming even evangelical, I cannot admit *that*. I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be evangelicals, and am at least persuaded that they who are so from reason and feeling must be happiest and safest. Do not be frightened from the connection by your brothers having most wit—wisdom is better than wit, and in the long run will certainly have the laugh on her side; and don't be frightened by the idea of his acting more strictly up to the precepts of the New Testament than others.

And now, my dear Fanny, having written so much on one side of the question, I shall turn round and entreat you not to commit yourself

farther, and not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection ; and if his deficiencies of manner, &c. &c., strike you more than all his good qualities, if you continue to think strongly of them, give him up at once. Things are now in such a state that you must resolve upon one or the other—either to allow him to go on as he has done, or whenever you are together behave with a coldness which may convince him that he has been deceiving himself. I have no doubt of his suffering a good deal for a time—a great deal when he feels that he must give you up ; but it is no creed of mine, as you must be well aware, that such sort of disappointments kill anybody.

Your sending the music was an admirable device, it made everything easy, and I do not know how I could have accounted for the parcel otherwise ; for though your dear papa most conscientiously hunted about till he found me alone in the dining-parlour, your Aunt C. had seen that he *had* a parcel to deliver. As it was, however, I do not think anything was suspected.

We have heard nothing fresh from Anna. I trust she is very comfortable in her new home.

Her letters have been very sensible and satisfactory, with no *parade* of happiness, which I liked them the better for. I have often known young married women write in a way I did not like in that respect.

You will be glad to hear that the first edition of M. P.[1] is all sold. Your uncle Henry is rather wanting me to come to town to settle about a second edition, but as I could not very conveniently leave home now, I have written him my will and pleasure, and, unless he still urges it, shall not go. I am very greedy and want to make the most of it, but as you are much above caring about money I shall not plague you with any particulars. The pleasures of vanity are more within your comprehension, and you will enter into mine at receiving the *praise* which every now and then comes to me through some channel or other.

Saturday.—Mr. Palmer spent yesterday with us, and is gone off with Cassy this morning. We have been expecting Miss Lloyd the last two days, and feel sure of her to-day. Mr. Knight and Mr. Edwd. Knight are to dine with us, and on Monday they are to dine with us again, accompanied by their respectable host and hostess.

[1] 'Mansfield Park.'

Sunday.—Your papa had given me messages to you, but they are unnecessary, as he writes by this post to Aunt Louisa. We had a pleasant party yesterday, at least *we* found it so. It is delightful to see him so cheerful and confident. Aunt Cass. and I dine at the Great House to-day. We shall be a snug half-dozen. Miss Lloyd came, as we expected, yesterday, and desires her love. She is very happy to hear of your learning the harp. I do not mean to send you what I owe Miss Hare, because I think you would rather not be paid beforehand.

Yours very affectionately, JANE AUSTEN.

Miss Knight, Goodnestone Farm,
Wingham, Kent.

LXXXI.

23 Hans Place: Wednesday (Nov. 30, 1814).

I am very much obliged to you, my dear Fanny, for your letter, and I hope you will write again soon, that I may know you to be all safe and happy at home.

Our visit to Hendon will interest you, I am sure, but I need not enter into the particulars of it, as your papa will be able to answer *almost* every

question. I certainly *could* describe her bedroom, and her drawers, and her closet, better than he can, but I do not feel that I can stop to do it. I was rather sorry to hear that she *is* to have an instrument; it seems throwing money away. They will wish the twenty-four guineas in the shape of sheets and towels six months hence; and as to her playing, it never can be anything.

Her purple pelisse rather surprised me. I thought we had known all paraphernalia of that sort. I do not mean to blame her; it looked very well, and I dare say she wanted it. I suspect nothing worse than its being got in secret, and not owned to anybody. I received a very kind note from her yesterday, to ask me to come again and stay a night with them. I cannot do it, but I was pleased to find that she had the *power* of doing so right a thing. My going was to give them *both* pleasure very properly.

I just saw Mr. Hayter at the play, and think his face would please me on acquaintance. I was sorry he did not dine here. It seemed rather odd to me to be in the theatre with nobody to *watch* for. I was quite composed myself, at leisure for all the agitated Isabella could raise.

Now, my dearest Fanny, I will begin a subject

which comes in very naturally. You frighten me out of my wits by your reference. Your affection gives me the highest pleasure, but indeed you must not let anything depend on my opinion; your own feelings, and none but your own, should determine such an important point. So far, however, as answering your question, I have no scruple. I am perfectly convinced that your present feelings, supposing you were to marry *now*, would be sufficient for his happiness; but when I think how very, very far it is from a '*now*,' and take everything that *may be* into consideration, I dare not say, 'Determine to accept him;' the risk is too great for *you*, unless your own sentiments prompt it.

You will think me perverse perhaps; in my last letter I was urging everything in his favour, and now I am inclining the other way, but I cannot help it; I am at present more impressed with the possible evil that may arise to *you* from engaging yourself to him—in word or mind—than with anything else. When I consider how few young men you have yet seen much of; how capable you are (yes, I do still think you *very* capable) of being really in love; and how full of temptation the next six or seven years of your life will probably be (it is the very period of life for the *strongest* attach-

ments to be formed),—I cannot wish you, with your present very cool feelings, to devote yourself in honour to him. It is very true that you never may attach another man his equal altogether ; but if that other man has the power of attaching you *more*, he will be in your eyes the most perfect.

I shall be glad if you *can* revive past feelings, and from your unbiassed self resolve to go on as you have done, but this I do not expect ; and without it I cannot wish you to be fettered. I should not be afraid of your *marrying* him ; with all his worth you would soon love him enough for the happiness of both ; but I should dread the continuance of this sort of tacit engagement, with such an uncertainty as there is of *when* it may be completed. Years may pass before he is independent ; you like him well enough to marry, but not well enough to wait ; the unpleasantness of appearing fickle is certainly great ; but if you think you want punishment for past illusions, there it is, and nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound *without* love—bound to one, and preferring another ; *that* is a punishment which you do *not* deserve.

I know you did not meet, or rather will not meet, to-day, as he called here yesterday ; and I am

glad of it. It does not seem very likely, at least, that he should be in time for a dinner visit sixty miles off. We did not see him, only found his card when we came home at four. Your Uncle H. merely observed that he was a day *after* '*the fair*.' We asked your brother on Monday (when Mr. Hayter was talked of) why he did not invite *him* too; saying, 'I know he is in town, for I met him the other day in Bond St.' Edward answered that he did not know where he was to be found. 'Don't you know his chambers?' 'No.'

I shall be most glad to hear from you again, my dearest Fanny, but it must not be later than Saturday, as we shall be off on Monday long before the letters are delivered; and write *something* that may do to be read or told. I am to take the Miss Moores back on Saturday, and when I return I shall hope to find your pleasant little flowing scrawl on the table. It will be a relief to me after playing at ma'ams, for though I like Miss H. M. as much as one can at my time of life after a day's acquaintance, it is uphill work to be talking to those whom one knows so little.

Only *one* comes back with me to-morrow, probably Miss Eliza, and I rather dread it. We shall not have two ideas in common. She is young,

pretty, chattering, and thinking chiefly, I presume, of dress, company, and admiration. Mr. Sanford is to join us at dinner, which will be a comfort, and in the evening, while your uncle and Miss Eliza play chess, he shall tell me comical things and I will laugh at them, which will be a pleasure to both.

I called in Keppel Street and saw them all, including dear Uncle Charles, who is to come and dine with us quietly to-day. Little Harriot sat in my lap, and seemed as gentle and affectionate as ever, and as pretty, except not being quite well. Fanny is a fine stout girl, talking incessantly, with an interesting degree of lisp and indistinctness, and very likely may be the handsomest in time. Cassy did not show more pleasure in seeing me than her sisters, but I expected no better. She does not shine in the tender feelings. She will never be a Miss O'Neil, more in the Mrs. Siddons line.

Thank you, but it is not settled yet whether I *do* hazard a second edition. We are to see Egerton to-day, when it will probably be determined. People are more ready to borrow and praise than to buy, which I cannot wonder at; but though I like praise as well as anybody, I like what Edward calls '*Pewter*,' too. I hope he continues careful of

his eyes and finds the good effect of it. I cannot suppose we differ in our ideas of the Christian religion. You have given an excellent description of it. We only affix a different meaning to the word *evangelical*.

Yours most affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

Miss Knight, Godmersham Park,
Faversham, Kent.

LXXXII.

Chawton: (Feb. 20, 1816).

MY DEAREST FANNY,

You are inimitable, irresistible. You are the delight of my life. Such letters, such entertaining letters, as you have lately sent! such a description of your queer little heart! such a lovely display of what imagination does! You are worth your weight in gold, or even in the new silver coinage. I cannot express to you what I have felt in reading your history of yourself—how full of pity and concern, and admiration and amusement, I have been! You are the paragon of all that is silly and sensible, common-place and eccentric, sad and lively, provoking and interesting. Who can keep pace with the fluctuations of your fancy, the capprizios of your taste, the contradictions of your feelings?

You are so odd, and all the time so perfectly natural!—so peculiar in yourself, and yet so like everybody else!

It is very, very gratifying to me to know you so intimately. You can hardly think what a pleasure it is to me to have such thorough pictures of your heart. Oh, what a loss it will be when you are married! You are too agreeable in your single state—too agreeable as a niece. I shall hate you when your delicious play of mind is all settled down into conjugal and maternal affections.

Mr. B—— frightens me. He will have you. I see you at the altar. I have *some* faith in Mrs. C. Cage's observation, and still more in Lizzy's; and besides, I know it *must* be so. He must be wishing to attach you. It would be too stupid and too shameful in him to be otherwise; and all the family are seeking your acquaintance.

Do not imagine that I have any real objection; I have rather taken a fancy to him than not, and I like the house for you. I only do not like you should marry anybody. And yet I do wish you to marry very much, because I know you will never be happy till you are; but the loss of a Fanny Knight will be never made up to me. My 'affec. niece F. C. B——' will be but a poor

substitute. I do not like your being nervous, and so apt to cry—it is a sign you are not quite well; but I hope Mr. Scud—as you always write his name (your Mr. Scuds amuses me very much)—will do you good.

What a comfort that Cassandra should be so recovered! It was more than we had expected. I can easily believe she was very patient and very good. I always loved Cassandra, for her fine dark eyes and sweet temper. I am almost entirely cured of my rheumatism—just a little pain in my knee now and then, to make me remember what it was, and keep on flannel. Aunt Cassandra nursed me so beautifully.

I enjoy your visit to Goodnestone, it must be a great pleasure to you; you have not seen Fanny Cage in comfort so long. I hope she represents and remonstrates and reasons with you properly. Why should you be living in dread of his marrying somebody else? (Yet, how natural!) You did not choose to have him yourself, why not allow him to take comfort where he can? In your conscience you *know* that he could not bear a companion with a more animated character. You cannot forget how you felt under the idea of its having been possible that he might have dined in Hans Place.

My dearest Fanny, I cannot bear you should be unhappy about him. Think of his principles; think of his father's objection, of want of money, &c. &c. But I am doing no good; no, all that I urge against him will rather make you take his part more, sweet, perverse Fanny.

And now I will tell you that we like your Henry to the utmost, to the very top of the glass, quite brimful. He is a very pleasing young man. I do not see how he could be mended. He does really bid fair to be everything his father and sister could wish; and William I love very much indeed, and so we do all; he is quite our own William. In short, we are very comfortable together; that is, we can answer for *ourselves*.

Mrs. Deedes is as welcome as May to all our benevolence to her son; we only lamented that we could not do more, and that the 50*l.* note we slipped into his hand at parting was necessarily the limit of our offering. Good Mrs. Deedes! Scandal and gossip; yes, I dare say you are well stocked, but I am very fond of Mrs. —— for reasons good. Thank you for mentioning her praise of 'Emma,' &c.

I have contributed the marking to Uncle H.'s shirts, and now they are a complete memorial of the tender regard of many.

Friday.—I had no idea when I began this yesterday of sending it before your brother went back, but I have written away my foolish thoughts at such a rate that I will not keep them many hours longer to stare me in the face.

Much obliged for the quadrilles, which I am grown to think pretty enough, though of course they are very inferior to the cotillions of my own day.

Ben and Anna walked here last Sunday to hear Uncle Henry, and she looked so pretty, it was quite a pleasure to see her, so young and so blooming, and so innocent, as if she had never had a wicked thought in her life, which yet one has some reason to suppose she must have had, if we believe the doctrine of original sin. I hope Lizzy will have her play very kindly arranged for her. Henry is generally thought very good-looking, but not so handsome as Edward. I think I prefer his face. Wm. is in excellent looks, has a fine appetite, and seems perfectly well. You will have a great break up at Godmersham in the spring. You *must* feel their all going. It is very right, however! Poor Miss C.! I shall pity her when she begins to understand herself.

Your objection to the quadrilles delighted me

exceedingly. Pretty well, for a lady irrecoverably attached to *one* person! Sweet Fanny, believe no such thing of yourself, spread no such malicious slander upon your understanding, within the precincts of your imagination. Do not speak ill of your sense merely for the gratification of your fancy; yours is sense which deserves more honourable treatment. You are *not* in love with him; you never *have* been really in love with him.

Yours very affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

Miss Knight, Godmersham Park,
Faversham, Kent.

LXXXIII.

Chawton: Thursday (March 13).

As to making any adequate return for such a letter as yours, my dearest Fanny, it is absolutely impossible. If I were to labour at it all the rest of my life, and live to the age of Methuselah, I could never accomplish anything so long and so perfect; but I cannot let William go without a few lines of acknowledgment and reply.

I have pretty well done with Mr. ——. By your description, he *cannot* be in love with you, however he may try at it; and I could not wish the

match unless there were a great deal of love on his side. I do not know what to do about Jemima Branfill. What does her dancing away with so much spirit mean? That she does not care for *him*, or only wishes to *appear* not to care for him? Who can understand a young lady?

Poor Mrs. C. Milles, that she should die on the wrong day at last, after being about it so long! It was unlucky that the Goodnestone party could not meet you, and I hope her friendly, obliging, social spirit, which delighted in drawing people together, was not conscious of the division and disappointment she was occasioning. I am sorry and surprised that you speak of her as having little to leave, and must feel for Miss Milles, though she *is* Molly, if a material loss of income is to attend her other loss. Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony, but I need not dwell on such arguments with *you*, pretty dear.

To you I shall say, as I have often said before, Do not be in a hurry, the right man will come at last; you will in the course of the next two or three years meet with somebody more generally unexceptionable than anyone you have yet known, who will love you as warmly as possible, and who will

so completely attract you that you will feel you never really loved before.

Do none of the A.'s ever come to balls now? You have never mentioned them as being at any. And what do you hear of the Gipps, or of Fanny and her husband?

Aunt Cassandra walked to Wyards yesterday with Mrs. Digweed. Anna has had a bad cold, and looks pale. She has just weaned Julia.

I have also heard lately from your Aunt Harriot, and cannot understand their plans in parting with Miss S., whom she seems very much to value now that Harriot and Eleanor are both of an age for a governess to be so useful to, especially as, when Caroline was sent to school some years, Miss *Bell* was still retained, though the others even then were nursery children. They have some good reason, I dare say, though I cannot penetrate it, and till I know what it is I shall invent a bad one, and amuse myself with accounting for the difference of measures by supposing Miss S. to be a superior sort of woman, who has never stooped to recommend herself to the master of the family by flattery, as Miss Bell did.

I *will* answer your kind questions more than you expect. 'Miss Catherine' is put upon the shelf

for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out; but I have a something ready for publication, which may, perhaps, appear about a twelvemonth hence. It is short—about the length of 'Catherine.' This is for yourself alone. Neither Mr. Salusbury nor Mr. Wildman is to know of it.

I am got tolerably well again, quite equal to walking about and enjoying the air, and by sitting down and resting a good while between my walks I get exercise enough. I have a scheme, however, for accomplishing more, as the weather grows spring-like. I mean to take to riding the donkey; it will be more independent and less troublesome than the use of the carriage, and I shall be able to go about with Aunt Cassandra in her walks to Alton and Wyards.

I hope you will think Wm. looking well; he was bilious the other day, and At. Cass. supplied him with a dose at his own request. I am sure *you* would have approved it. Wm. and I are the best of friends. I love him very much. Everything is so *natural* about him—his affections, his manners, and his drollery. He entertains and interests us extremely.

Mat. Hammond and A. M. Shaw are people

whom I cannot care for in themselves, but I enter into their situation, and am glad they are so happy. If I were the Duchess of Richmond, I should be very miserable about my son's choice.

Our fears increase for poor little Harriot; the latest account is, that Sir Ev. Home is confirmed in his opinion of there being water on the brain. I hope Heaven, in its mercy, will take her soon. Her poor father will be quite worn out by his feelings for her; he cannot spare Cassy at present, she is an occupation and a comfort to him.

LXXXIV.

Chawton: Sunday (March 23).

I am very much obliged to you; my dearest Fanny, for sending me Mr. W.'s conversation; I had great amusement in reading it, and I hope I am not affronted, and do not think the worse of him for having a brain so very different from mine; but my strongest sensation of all is *astonishment* at your being able to press him on the subject so perseveringly; and I agree with your papa, that it was not fair. When he knows the truth he will be uncomfortable.

You are the oddest creature! Nervous enough in some respects, but in others perfectly without

nerves! Quite unrepulsable, hardened, and impudent. Do not oblige him to read any more. Have mercy on him, tell him the truth, and make him an apology. He and I should not in the least agree, of course, in our ideas of novels and heroines. Pictures of perfection, as you know, make me sick and wicked; but there is some very good sense in what he says, and I particularly respect him for wishing to think well of all young ladies: it shows an amiable and a delicate mind. And he deserves better treatment than to be obliged to read any more of my works.

Do not be surprised at finding Uncle Henry acquainted with my having another ready for publication. I could not say No when he asked me, but he knows nothing more of it. You will not like it, so you need not be impatient. You may *perhaps* like the heroine, as she is almost too good for me.

Many thanks for your kind care for my health; I certainly have not been well for many weeks, and about a week ago I was very poorly. I have had a good deal of fever at times, and indifferent nights; but I am considerably better now and am recovering my looks a little, which have been bad enough—black and white, and every wrong colour.

I must not depend upon being ever very blooming again. Sickness is a dangerous indulgence at my time of life. Thank you for everything you tell me. I do not feel worthy of it by anything that I can say in return, but I assure you my pleasure in your letters is quite as great as ever, and I am interested and amused just as you could wish me. If there is a Miss *Marsden*, I perceive whom she will marry.

Evening.—I was languid and dull and very bad company when I wrote the above; I am better now, to my own feelings at least, and wish I may be more agreeable. We are going to have rain, and after that very pleasant genial weather, which will exactly do for me, as my saddle will then be completed, and air and exercise is what I want. Indeed, I shall be very glad when the event at Scarlets is over, the expectation of it keeps us in a worry, your grandmamma especially; she sits brooding over evils which cannot be remedied, and conduct impossible to be understood.

Now the reports from Keppel St. are rather better; little Harriot's headaches are abated, and Sir Evd. is satisfied with the effect of the mercury, and does not despair of a cure. The complaint I find is not considered incurable nowadays, provided

the patient be young enough not to have the head hardened. The water in that case may be drawn off by mercury. But though this is a new idea to us, perhaps it may have been long familiar to you through your friend Mr. Scud. I hope his high renown is sustained by driving away William's cough.

Tell Wm. that Triggs is as beautiful and condescending as ever, and was so good as to dine with us to-day, and tell him that I often play at *nines* and think of him.

The Papillons came back on Friday night, but I have not seen them yet, as I do not venture to church. I cannot hear, however, but that they are the same Mr. P. and his sister they used to be. She has engaged a new maidservant in Mrs. Calker's room, whom she means to make also housekeeper under herself.

Old Philmore was buried yesterday, and I, by way of saying something to Triggs, observed that it had been a very handsome funeral; but his manner of reply made me suppose that it was not generally esteemed so. I can only be sure of *one* part being very handsome—Triggs himself, walking behind in his green coat. Mrs. Philmore attended as chief mourner, in bombazine, made very short, and flounced with crape.

Tuesday.—I have had various plans as to this letter, but at last I have determined that Uncle Henry shall forward it from London. I want to see how Canterbury looks in the direction. When once Uncle H. has left *us* I shall wish him with *you.* London has become a hateful place to him, and he is always depressed by the idea of it. I hope he will be in time for your sick. I am sure he must do that part of his duty as excellently as all the rest. He returned yesterday from Steventon, and was with us by breakfast, bringing Edward with him, only that Edwd. stayed to breakfast at Wyards. We had a pleasant family day, for the Altons dined with us, the last visit of the kind probably which *she* will be able to pay us for many a month.

I hope your own Henry is in France, and that you have heard from him; the passage once over, he will feel all happiness. I took my first ride yesterday, and liked it very much. I went up Mounter's Lane and round by where the new cottages are to be, and found the exercise and everything very pleasant; and I had the advantage of agreeable companions, as At. Cass. and Edward walked by my side. At. Cass. is such an excellent

nurse, so assiduous and unwearied! But you know all that already.

Very affectionately yours, J. Austen.

Miss Knight, Godmersham Park,
Canterbury.

The following letters have been given me by one of Mrs. B. Lefroy's daughters, and are interesting as showing the sympathy which Jane had for a young authoress, and the care and minuteness with which she looked into every detail of composition. 'Anna Austen' was engaged to Mr. Lefroy in 1814, and was occupied at the same time in writing a novel which she submitted to the valuable criticism of 'Aunt Jane.' The first letter has no date, but from the context must have been written in May or June.

LXXXV.

My dear Anna,

I am very much obliged to you for sending your MS. It has entertained me extremely; indeed all of us. I read it aloud to your Grandmama and Aunt Cass, and we were all very much pleased. The spirit does not droop at all. Sir Thos., Lady

Helen and St. Julian are very well done, and Cecilia continues to be interesting in spite of her being so amiable. It was very fit you should advance her age. I like the beginning of Devereux Forester very much, a great deal better than if he had been very good or very bad. A few verbal corrections are all that I felt tempted to make; the principal of them is a speech of St. Julian to Lady Helen, which you see I have presumed to alter. As Lady H. is Cecilia's superior, it would not be correct to talk of her being introduced. It is Cecilia who must be introduced. And I do not like a lover speaking in the 3rd person; it is too much like the part of Lord Overtley, and *I* think it not natural. If *you* think differently, however, you need not mind me. I am impatient for more, and only wait for a safe conveyance to return this.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

LXXXVI.

August 10, 1814.

My dear Anna,

I am quite ashamed to find that I have never answered some question of yours in a former note. I kept it on purpose to refer to it at a proper time and then forgot it. I like the name 'Which is the Heroine' very well, and I daresay shall grow to

like it very much in time; but 'Enthusiasm' was something so very superior that my common title must appear to disadvantage. I am not sensible of any blunders about Dawlish;[1] the library was pitiful and wretched twelve years ago and not likely to have anybody's publications. There is no such title as Desborough either among dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, or barons. These were your inquiries. I will now thank you for your envelope received this morning. Your Aunt Cass is as well pleased with St. Julian as ever, and I am delighted with the idea of seeing Progillian again.

Wednesday 17.—We have now just finished the first of the three books I had the pleasure of receiving yesterday. I read it aloud and we are all very much amused, and like the work quite as well as ever. I depend on getting through a another book before dinner, but there is really a good deal of respectable reading in your forty-eight pages. I have no doubt six would make a very good-sized volume. You must have been quite pleased to have accomplished so much. I like Lord Portman[1] and his brother very much. I am only afraid that

[1] It must be remembered that there was no 'Lord Portman' in 1814, the creation of that title having been in 1837.

Lord P.'s good nature will make most people like him better than he deserves. The whole family are very good, and Lady Anne, who was your great dread, you have succeeded particularly well with. Bell Griffin is just what she should be. My corrections have not been more important than before; here and there we have thought the sense could be expressed in fewer words, and I have scratched out Sir Thos. from walking with the others to the stables, &c. the very day after breaking his arm; for, though I find your papa did walk out immediately after his arm was set, I think it can be so little usual as to appear unnatural in a book. Lynn will not do. Lynn is towards forty miles from Dawlish and would not be talked of there. I have put Starcross instead. If you prefer Easton that must be always safe.

I have also scratched out the introduction between Lord Portman and his brother and Mr. Griffin. A country surgeon (don't tell Mr. C. Lyford) would not be introduced to men of their rank, and when Mr. P. is first brought in, he would not be introduced as the Honourable. That distinction is never mentioned at such times, at least I believe not. Now we have finished the second book, or

rather the fifth. I *do* think you had better omit Lady Helena's postscript. To those that are acquainted with 'Pride and Prejudice' it will seem an imitation. And your Aunt C. and I both recommend your making a little alteration in the last scene between Devereux F. and Lady Clanmurray and her daughter. We think they press him too much, more than sensible or well-bred women would do; Lady C., at least, should have discretion enough to be sooner satisfied with his determination of not going with them. I am very much pleased with Egerton as yet. I did not expect to like him, but I do, and Susan is a very nice little animated creature; but St. Julian is the delight of our lives. He is quite interesting. The whole of his break off with Lady Helena is very well done. Yes; Russell Square is a very proper distance from Berkeley Square. We are reading the last book. They must be two days going from Dawlish to Bath. They are nearly 100 miles apart.[1]

[1] Our modern race of travellers would hardly be satisfied with this rate of progress. We have somewhat accelerated our speed since Jane's days, and when inclined to grumble because a train is ten minutes late, should do well to remember what advantages we enjoy over our respected predecessors.

Thursday.—We finished it last night after our return from drinking tea at the Great House. The last chapter does not please us quite so well; we do not thoroughly like the play, perhaps from having had too much of plays in that way lately (vide 'Mansfield Park'), and we think you had better not leave England. Let the Portmans go to Ireland; but as you know nothing of the manners there, you had better not go with them. You will be in danger of giving false representations. Stick to Bath and the Foresters. There you will be quite at home.

Your Aunt C. does not like desultory novels, and is rather afraid yours will be too much so, that there will be too frequently a change from one set of people to another, and that circumstances will be introduced of apparent consequence which will lead to nothing. It will not be so great an objection to me if it does. I allow much more latitude than she does, and think nature and spirit cover many sins of a wandering story, and people in general do not care so much about it for your comfort.

I should like to have had more of Devereux. I do not feel enough acquainted with him. You

were afraid of meddling with him I dare say. I like your sketch of Lord Clanmurray, and your picture of the two young girls' enjoyment is very good. I have not noticed St. Julian's serious conversation with Cecilia, but I like it exceedingly. What he says about the madness of otherwise sensible women on the subject of their daughters coming out is worth its weight in gold.

I do not perceive that the language sinks. Pray go on.

LXXXVII.

Chawton: (Sept. 9).

My dear Anna,

We have been very much amused by your three books, but I have a good many criticisms to make, more than you will like. We are not satisfied with Mrs. Forester settling herself as tenant and near neighbour to such a man as Sir Thomas, without having some other inducement to go there. She ought to have some friend living thereabouts to tempt her. A woman going with two girls just growing up into a neighbourhood where she knows nobody but one man of not very good character, is an awkwardness which so prudent a woman as Mrs. F. would not be likely to fall into. Remember she *is* very prudent. You

must not let her act inconsistently. Give her a friend, and let that friend be invited by Sir Thomas H. to meet her, and we shall have no objection to her dining at the Priory as she does; but otherwise a woman in her situation would hardly go there before she had been visited by other families. I like the scene itself, the Miss Leslie, Lady Anne, and the music very much. Leslie *is* a noble name. Sir Thomas H. you always do very well. I have only taken the liberty of expunging one phrase of his which would not be allowable—'Bless my heart!' It is too familiar and inelegant. Your grandmother is more disturbed at Mrs. Forester's not returning the Egertons' visit sooner than by anything else. They ought to have called at the Parsonage before Sunday. You describe a sweet place, but your descriptions are often more minute than will be liked. You give too many particulars of right hand and left. Mrs. Forester is not careful enough of Susan's health. Susan ought not to be walking out so soon after heavy rains, taking long walks in the dirt. An anxious mother would not suffer it. I like your Susan very much, she is a sweet creature, her playfulness of fancy is very delightful.

I like her as she is now exceedingly, but I am not quite so well satisfied with her behaviour to George R. At first she seems all over attachment and feeling, and afterwards to have none at all; she is so extremely confused at the ball and so well satisfied apparently with Mr. Morgan. She seems to have changed her character.

You are now collecting your people delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life. Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on, and I hope you will do a great deal more, and make full use of them while they are so very favourably arranged.

You are but now coming to the heart and beauty of your story. Until the heroine grows up the fun must be imperfect, but I expect a great deal of entertainment from the next three or four books, and I hope you will not resent these remarks by sending me no more. We like the Egertons very well. We see no blue pantaloons or cocks or hens. There is nothing to enchant one certainly in Mr. L. L., but we make no objection to him, and his inclination to like Susan is pleasing. The sister is a good contrast, but the name

of Rachel is as much I can bear. They are not so much like the Papillons as I expected. Your last chapter is very entertaining, the conversation on genius, &c.; Mr. St. Julian and Susan both talk in character, and very well. In some former parts Cecilia is perhaps a little too solemn and good, but upon the whole her disposition is very well opposed to Susan's, her want of imagination is very natural. I wish you could make Mrs. Forester talk more; but she must be difficult to manage and make entertaining, because there is so much good sense and propriety about her that nothing can be made very broad. Her economy and her ambition must not be staring. The papers left by Mrs. Fisher are very good. Of course one guesses something. I hope when you have written a great deal more, you will be equal to scratching out some of the past. The scene with Mrs. Mellish I should condemn; it is prosy and nothing to the purpose; and indeed the more you can find in your heart to curtail between Dawlish and Newton Priors, the better I think it will be—one does not care for girls until they are grown up. Your Aunt C. quite understands the exquisiteness of that name—Newton Priors is really a nonpareil. Milton would

have given his eyes to have thought of it. Is not the cottage taken from Tollard Royal?' [Thus far the letter was written on the ninth, but before it was finished news arrived at Chawton of the death of Mrs. Charles Austen. She died in her confinement and the baby died also. She left three little girls—Cassie, Harriet, and Fanny. It was not until the 18th that Jane resumed her letter as follows:]

Sunday.—I am very glad, dear Anna, that I wrote as I did before this sad event occurred. I have only to add that your Grandmama does not seem the worse now for the shock.

I shall be very happy to receive more of your work if more is ready; and you write so fast that I have great hopes Mr. Digweed will come back freighted with such a cargo as not all his hops or his sheep could equal the value of.

Your grandmama desires me to say that she will have finished your shoes to-morrow, and thinks they will look very well. And that she depends upon seeing you as you promise before you quit the country, and hopes you will give her more than a day.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

Jane was quite right in her expectation of

more. A considerable packet was transmitted by the next opportunity. In these days, a bride expectant has all the time she can spare from her lover occupied by writing innumerable notes of thanks for innumerable presents and good wishes, to say nothing of those concerning the expensive and enormous trousseau now thought necessary. Of such business Miss Anna Austen had very little, and therefore she had ample leisure for her story.

LXXXVIII.

Chawton: Wednesday (Sept. 28).

My dear Anna,

I hope you do not depend on having your book again immediately. I kept it that your grandmama may hear it, for it has not been possible yet to have any public reading. I have read it to your Aunt Cassandra, however, in our own room at night, while we undressed, and with a great deal of pleasure. We like the first chapter extremely, with only a little doubt whether Lady Helena is not almost too foolish. The matrimonial dialogue is very good certainly. I like Susan as well as ever, and begin now not to care at all about Cecilia; she may stay at Easton Court as long as she likes. Henry Mellish will be, I am

afraid, too much in the common novel style—a handsome, amiable, unexceptionable young man (such as do not much abound in real life), desperately in love and all in vain. But I have no business to judge him so early. Jane Egerton is a very natural comprehensible girl, and the whole of her acquaintance with Susan and Susan's letter to Cecilia are very pleasing and quite in character. But Miss Egerton does not entirely satisfy us. She is too formal and solemn, we think, in her advice to her brother not to fall in love; and it is hardly like a sensible woman—it is putting it into his head. We should like a few hints from her better. We feel really obliged to you for introducing a Lady Kenrick; it will remove the greatest fault in the work, and I give you credit for considerable forbearance as an author in adopting so much of our opinion. I expect high fun about Mrs. Fisher and Sir Thomas. You have been perfectly right in telling Ben. Lefroy of your work, and I am very glad to hear how much he likes it. His encouragement and approbation must be 'quite beyond everything.'[1] I do not at all wonder at

[1] A phrase always in the mouth of one of the Chawton neighbours, Mrs. H. Digweed.

his not expecting to like anybody so well as Cecilia at first, but I shall be surprised if he does not become a Susanite in time. Devereux Forester's being ruined by his vanity is extremely good, but I wish you would not let him plunge into a 'vortex of dissipation.' I do not object to the thing, but I cannot bear the expression; it is such thorough novel slang, and so old that I daresay Adam met with it in the first novel he opened. Indeed, I did very much like to know Ben's opinion. I hope he will continue to be pleased with it, and I think he must, but I cannot flatter him with there being much incident. We have no great right to wonder at his not valueing the name of Progillian. That is a source of delight which even *he* can hardly be quite competent to.

Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. It is not fair. He has fame and profit enough as a poet, and should not be taking the bread out of the mouths of other people.

I do not like him, and do not mean to like 'Waverley' if I can help it, but fear I must.

I am quite determined, however, not to be pleased with Mrs. West's 'Alicia De Lacy,' should

I ever meet with it, which I hope I shall not. I think I can be stout against anything written by Mrs. West. I have made up my mind to like no novels really but Miss Edgeworth's, yours, and my own.

What can you do with Egerton to increase the interest for him? I wish you could contrive something, some family occurrence to bring out his good qualities more. Some distress among brothers and sisters to relieve by the sale of his curacy! Something to carry him mysteriously away, and then be heard of at York or Edinburgh in an old great coat. I would not seriously recommend anything improbable, but if you could invent something spirited for him it would have a good effect. He might lend all his money to Captain Morris, but then he would be a great fool if he did. Cannot the Morrises quarrel and he reconcile them? Excuse the liberty I take in these suggestions.

Your Aunt Frank's nursemaid has just given her warning, but whether she is worth your having, or would take your place, I know not. She was Mrs. Webb's maid before she went to the Great House. She leaves your aunt because she

cannot agree with the other servants. She is in love with the man and her head seems rather turned. He returns her affection, but she fancies every one else is wanting him and envying her. Her previous service must have fitted her for such a place as yours, and she is very active and cleanly. The Webbs are really gone! When I saw the wagons at the door, and thought of all the trouble they must have in moving, I began to reproach myself for not having liked them better, but since the wagons have disappeared my conscience has been closed again, and I am excessively glad they are gone.

I am very fond of Sherlock's sermons and prefer them to almost any.

Your affectionate Aunt, J. AUSTEN.

If you wish me to speak to the maid let me know.

In October Jane's correspondent paid her last visit to Chawton as Anna Austen. Very soon after her return she wrote to tell them her wedding day was fixed. On November 8 she was married in the parish church of Steventon. Mr. B. Lefroy did not take holy orders until about

three years after the marriage, and the first home of the young couple was at Hendon, to which place the following letter was addressed :

LXXXIX.

Chawton: (Nov. 21, 1814).

My dear Anna,

I met Harriet Benn yesterday. She gave me her congratulations and desired they might be forwarded to you, and there they are. The chief news from this country is the death of old Mrs. Dormer. Mrs. Clement walks about in a new black velvet pelisse lined with yellow, and a white bobbin net veil, and looks remarkably well in them.

I think I understand the country about Hendon from your description. It must be very pretty in summer. Should you know from the atmosphere that you were within a dozen miles of London? Make everybody at Hendon admire 'Mansfield Park.' Your affectionate Aunt, J. A.

The next letter is written from Hans Place, where Jane was staying with her brother Henry, and from which they had recently driven down to see the newly-married couple at Hendon.

XC.

Hans Place (Nov. 28, 1814).

My dear Anna,

I assure you we all came away very much pleased with our visit. We talked of you for about a mile and a half with great satisfaction; and I have been just sending a very good report of you to Miss Benn, with a full account of your dress for Susan and Maria.

We were all at the play last night to see Miss O'Neil in 'Isabella.' I do not think she was quite equal to my expectations. I fancy I want something more than can be. I took two pocket-handkerchiefs, but had very little occasion for either. She is an elegant creature, however, and hugs Mr. Young delightfully. I am going this morning to see the little girls in Keppel Street. Cassy was excessively interested about your marriage when she heard of it, which was not until she was to drink your health on the wedding day.

She asked a thousand questions in her usual manner, what he said to you and what you said to him. If your uncle were at home he would send his best love, but I will not impose any base fictitious remembrances on you, mine I can honestly give, and remain Your affectionate Aunt, J. Austen.

Marriage did not immediately stop Mrs. Lefroy's story-writing, and early in December she sent her aunt another packet, which elicited the following letter :—

XCI.

Hans Place (Wednesday).

My dear Anna,

I have been very far from finding your book an evil, I assure you. I read it immediately, and with great pleasure. I think you are going on very well. The description of Dr. Griffin and Lady Helena's unhappiness is very good, and just what was likely to be. I am curious to know what the end of them will be. The name of Newton Priors is really invaluable; I never met with anything superior to it. It is delightful, and one could live on the name of Newton Priors for a twelvemonth. Indeed, I think you get on very fast. I only wish other people of my acquaintance could compose as rapidly. I am pleased with the dog scene and with the whole of George and Susan's love, but am more particularly struck with your serious conversations. They are very good throughout. St. Julian's history was quite a surprise to me. You had not very long known it yourself I suspect; but I have no objection to

make to the circumstance, and it is very well told. His having been in love with the aunt gives Cecilia an additional interest with him. I like the idea—a very proper compliment to an aunt! I rather imagine indeed that nieces are seldom chosen but out of compliment to some aunt or another. I daresay Ben was in love with me once, and would never have thought of you if he had not supposed me dead of scarlet fever. Yes, I was in a mistake as to the number of books. I thought I had read three before the three at Chawton, but fewer than six will not do. I want to see dear Bell Griffin again; and had you not better give some hint of St. Julian's early history in the beginning of the story?

We shall see nothing of Streatham while we are in town, as Mrs. Hill is to lye in of a daughter. Mrs. Blackstone is to be with her. Mrs. Heathcote and Miss Bigg[1] are just leaving. The latter writes me word that Miss Blackford is married, but I have never seen it in the papers, and one may as well be single if the wedding is not to be in print.

Your affectionate Aunt, J. A.

[1] Sisters to Mrs. Hall.

In August 1815 Mr. and Mrs. B. Lefroy moved from Hendon, and took a small house called Wyards, near Alton and within a walk of Chawton. Wyards is more than once mentioned in our letters. In the autumn of 1815, Jane went up to Hans Place (as has been already stated) to visit her brother Henry, and to superintend the publishing of 'Emma,' and at that time the following letter was written :—

XCII.

Chawton: Friday (Sept. 29).

My dear Anna,

We told Mr. B. Lefroy that if the weather did not prevent us we should certainly come and see you to-morrow and bring Cassy, trusting to your being good enough to give her a dinner about one o'clock, that we might be able to be with you the earlier and stay the longer. But on giving Cassy her choice between the Fair at Alton or Wyards, it must be confessed that she has preferred the former, which we trust will not greatly affront you ; if it does, you may hope that some little Anne hereafter may revenge the insult by a similar preference of an Alton Fair to her Cousin Cassy. In the meanwhile we have determined to put off our visit to you until Monday, which we hope will be

not less convenient. I wish the weather may not resolve on another put off. I must come to you before Wednesday if it be possible, for on that day I am going to London for a week or two with your Uncle Henry, who is expected here on Sunday. If Monday should appear too dirty for walking, and Mr. Lefroy would be so kind as to come and fetch me, I should be much obliged to him. Cassy might be of the party, and your Aunt Cassandra will take another opportunity.

Yours very affectionately, my dear Anna,

J. Austen.

But before the week or two to which she had limited her visit in Hans Place was at an end, her brother fell ill, and on October 22 he was in such danger that she wrote to Steventon to summon her father to town. The letter was two days on the road, and reached him on Sunday the 24th. Even then he did not start immediately. In the evening he and his wife rode to Chawton, and it was not until the next day that he and Cassandra arrived in Hans Place. The malady from which Henry Austen was suffering was low fever, and he was for some days at death's door; but he rallied soon after his brother and sisters arrived,

and recovered so quickly that the former was able to leave him at the end of the week. The great anxiety and fatigue which Jane underwent at this time was supposed by some of her family to have broken down her health. She was in a very feeble and exhausted condition when the bank in which her brother Henry was a partner broke, and he not only lost all that he possessed, but most of his relations suffered severely also. Jane was well enough to pay several visits with her sister in the summer of 1816, including one to Steventon—the last she ever paid to that home of her childhood. The last note which Mrs. Lefroy had preserved is dated :—

XCIII.

June 23, 1816.

My dear Anna,

Cassy desires her best thanks for the book. She was quite delighted to see it. I do not know when I have seen her so much struck by anybody's kindness as on this occasion. Her sensibility seems to be opening to the perception of great actions. These gloves having appeared on the pianoforte ever since you were here on Friday, we imagine they must be yours. Mrs. Digweed returned yesterday through all the afternoon's rain, and

was of course wet through, but in speaking of it she never once said 'it was beyond everything,' which I am sure it must have been. Your Mama means to ride to Speen Hill to-morrow to see the Mrs. Hulberts, who are both very indifferent. By all accounts they really are breaking now—not so stout as the old jackass.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

Chawton: Sunday, June 23.

Uncle Charles's birthday.

I insert here a letter of Jane Austen's written *backwards*, addressed to her niece 'Cassy,' daughter of Captain Charles Austen (afterwards Admiral) when a little girl.

XCIV.

YM RAED YSSAC,

I hsiw uoy a yppah wen raey. Ruoy xis snisuoc emac ereh yadretsey, dna dah hcae a eceip fo ekac. Siht si elttil Yssac's yadhtrib, dna ehs si eerht sraey dlo. Knarf sah nugeb gninrael Nital ew deef eht Nibor yreve gninrom. Yllas netfo seriuqne retfa uoy. Yllas Mahneb sah tog a wen neerg nwog. Teirrah Thgink semoc yreve yad ot daer ot Tnua Ardnassac. Doog eyb ym raed Yssac.

Tnua Ardnassac sdnes reh tseb evol, dna os ew od lla.

Ruoy etanoitceffa Tnua, ENAJ NETSUA.

Notwahc: Naj. 8.

In January 1817 she wrote of herself as better and able to walk into Alton, and hoped in the summer she should be able to walk back. In April her father in a note to Mrs. Lefroy says, 'I was happy to have a good account of herself written by her own hand, in a letter from your Aunt Jane; but all who love, and that is all who know her, must be anxious on her account.' We all know how well grounded that anxiety was, and how soon her relations had to lament over the loss of the dearest and brightest member of their family.

And now I come to the saddest letters of all, those which tell us of the end of that bright life, cut short just at the time when the world might have hoped that unabated intellectual vigour, supplemented by the experience brought by maturer years, would have produced works if possible even more fascinating than those with which she had already embellished the literature of her country. But it was not to be. The fiat had gone forth—

the ties which bound that sweet spirit to earth were to be severed, and a blank left, never to be filled, in the family which her loved and loving presence had blessed, and where she had been so well and fondly appreciated. In the early spring of 1817 the unfavourable symptoms increased, and the failure of her health was too visible to be neglected. Still, no apprehensions of immediate danger were entertained, and it is probable that when she left Chawton for Winchester in May, she did not recognize the fact that she was bidding a last farewell to 'Home.' Happy for her if it was so, for there are few things more melancholy than to look upon any beloved place or person with the knowledge that it is for '*the last time.*' In all probability this grief was spared to Jane, for even after her arrival at Winchester she spoke and wrote as if recovery was hopeful; and I fancy that her relations were by no means aware that the end was so near.

I find from my mother's pocket-books that she received at least four letters from 'Aunt Jane' in 1817, the date of the last being March 26, but of these I have found none. She wrote to her Aunt several times in June (as Cassandra's letters

imply), and as late as July 9, 10, and 15, the last letter of which must either be the one specially alluded to in Letter 95, or must have arrived after her death. The entries in my mother's pocket-books at this time show how much her heart was with her relations at Winchester.

June 14.—'A sad account of my poor dear Aunt Jane.'

June 18.—'Another hopeless account from Winchester.'

June 29.—'Much the same account of dear Aunt Jane.'

Then comes (July 20) 'A letter from Papa announcing my poor dear Aunt Jane Austen's death at four on Friday morn,' and further on are allusions to the letters which follow.

July 22.—'A long letter from dear Aunt Cass., with many affecting particulars.' 'Wrote great part of a letter to Aunt Cass. and was miserable.' My mother always summarized the 'principal events of the year' at the end of each pocket-book, and at the head of her summary of those in 1817 comes: 'I had the misery of losing my dear Aunt Jane after a lingering illness.' So terminated the friendship of two natures, which in

many respects singularly harmonized, and each of which, whilst on earth, contributed in a remarkable degree to the happiness of those among whom its lot was cast.

Cassandra's letters tell the tale of the event in words that require no addition from me. They are simple and affecting—the words of one who had been stricken by a great grief, but whose religion stood her in good stead, and enabled her to bear it with fortitude. The firm and loving bond of union which had ever united the Austen family, naturally intensified their sorrow at the loss of one of their number, and that the one of whom they had been so proud as well as so fond. They laid her within the walls of the old cathedral which she had loved so much, and went sorrowfully back to their homes, with the feeling that nothing could replace to them the treasure they had lost. And most heavily of all must the blow have fallen upon the only sister, the correspondent, the companion, the other self of Jane, who had to return alone to the desolate home, and to the mother to whose comforts the two had hitherto ministered together, but who would henceforward have her alone on whom to rely. The return must have

been sad indeed; every moment the surrounding associations must have awakened old memories and kept alive her heart-grief, and nothing could have rendered the misery endurable save that hope so earnestly expressed in her letters, that she and her sister would be re-united hereafter. They are indeed sad letters, but they form the proper conclusion to the series which I give to the world. The lock of Jane's hair, mentioned at the end of the last letter, was set in an oval brooch, bearing simply the inscription of her name and the date of her death. I have it now in my possession.

Letters from Miss Cassandra Austen to her niece Miss Knight, after the death of her sister Jane, July 18, 1817.

XCV.

Winchester: Sunday.

My dearest Fanny,

Doubly dear to me now for her dear sake whom we have lost. She did love you most sincerely, and never shall I forget the proofs of love you gave her during her illness in writing those kind, amusing letters at a time when I know your feelings would have dictated so different a style. Take the only reward I can give you in the assurance that your benevolent purpose *was* answered; you *did* contribute to her enjoyment.

Even your last letter afforded pleasure. I merely cut the seal and gave it to her; she opened it and read it herself, afterwards she gave it me to read, and then talked to me a little and not uncheerfully of its contents, but there was then a languor about her which prevented her taking the same interest in anything she had been used to do.

Since Tuesday evening, when her complaint returned, there was a visible change, she slept more and much more comfortably; indeed, during the last eight-and-forty hours she was more asleep

than awake. Her looks altered and she fell away, but I perceived no material diminution of strength, and, though I was then hopeless of a recovery, I had no suspicion how rapidly my loss was approaching.

I *have* lost a treasure, such a sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed. She was the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow; I had not a thought concealed from her, and it is as if I had lost a part of myself. I loved her only too well—not better than she deserved, but I am conscious that my affection for her made me sometimes unjust to and negligent of others; and I can acknowledge, more than as a general principle, the justice of the Hand which has struck this blow.

You know me too well to be at all afraid that I should suffer materially from my feelings; I am perfectly conscious of the extent of my irreparable loss, but I am not at all overpowered and very little indisposed, nothing but what a short time, with rest and change of air, will remove. I thank God that I was enabled to attend her to the last, and amongst my many causes of self-reproach I have not to add any wilful neglect of her comfort.

She felt herself to be dying about half-an-hour

before she became tranquil and apparently unconscious. During that half-hour was her struggle, poor soul! She said she could not tell us what she suffered, though she complained of little fixed pain. When I asked her if there was anything she wanted, her answer was she wanted nothing but death, and some of her words were: 'God grant me patience, pray for me, oh, pray for me!' Her voice was affected, but as long as she spoke she was intelligible.

I hope I do not break your heart, my dearest Fanny, by these particulars; I mean to afford you gratification whilst I am relieving my own feelings. I could not write so to anybody else; indeed you are the only person I have written to at all, excepting your grandmamma—it was to her, not your Uncle Charles, I wrote on Friday.

Immediately after dinner on Thursday I went into the town to do an errand which your dear aunt was anxious about. I returned about a quarter before six and found her recovering from faintness and oppression; she got so well as to be able to give me a minute account of her seizure, and when the clock struck six she was talking quietly to me.

I cannot say how soon afterwards she was

seized again with the same faintness, which was followed by the sufferings she could not describe; but Mr. Lyford had been sent for, had applied something to give her ease, and she was in a state of quiet insensibility by seven o'clock at the latest. From that time till half-past four, when she ceased to breathe, she scarcely moved a limb, so that we have every reason to think, with gratitude to the Almighty, that her sufferings were over. A slight motion of the head with every breath remained till almost the last. I sat close to her with a pillow in my lap to assist in supporting her head, which was almost off the bed, for six hours; fatigue made me then resign my place to Mrs. J. A. for two hours and a-half, when I took it again, and in about an hour more she breathed her last.

I was able to close her eyes myself, and it was a great gratification to me to render her those last services. There was nothing convulsed which gave the idea of pain in her look; on the contrary, but for the continual motion of the head she gave one the idea of a beautiful statue, and even now, in her coffin, there is such a sweet, serene air over her countenance as is quite pleasant to contemplate.

This day, my dearest Fanny, you have had the

melancholy intelligence, and I know you suffer severely, but I likewise know that you will apply to the fountain-head for consolation, and that our merciful God is never deaf to such prayers as you will offer.

The last sad ceremony is to take place on Thursday morning; her dear remains are to be deposited in the cathedral. It is a satisfaction to me to think that they are to lie in a building she admired so much; her precious soul, I presume to hope, reposes in a far superior mansion. May mine one day be re-united to it!

Your dear papa, your Uncle Henry, and Frank and Edwd. Austen, instead of his father, will attend. I hope they will none of them suffer lastingly from their pious exertions. The ceremony must be over before ten o'clock, as the cathedral service begins at that hour, so that we shall be at home early in the day, for there will be nothing to keep us here afterwards.

Your Uncle James came to us yesterday, and is gone home to-day. Uncle H. goes to Chawton to-morrow morning; he has given every necessary direction here, and I think his company there will do good. He returns to us again on Tuesday evening.

I did not think to have written a long letter when I began, but I have found the employment draw me on, and I hope I shall have been giving you more pleasure than pain. Remember me kindly to Mrs. J. Bridges (I am so glad she is with you now), and give my best love to Lizzie and all the others.

I am, my dearest Fanny,
Most affectionately yours,
Cass. Eliz. Austen.

I have said nothing about those at Chawton, because I am sure you hear from your papa.

XCVI.

Chawton: Tuesday (July 29, 1817).

My dearest Fanny,

I have just read your letter for the third time, and thank you most sincerely for every kind expression to myself, and still more warmly for your praises of her who I believe was better known to you than to any human being besides myself. Nothing of the sort could have been more gratifying to me than the manner in which you write of her, and if the dear angel is conscious of what passes here, and is not above all earthly feelings, she may perhaps receive pleasure in being so mourned.

Had *she* been the survivor I can fancy her speaking of *you* in almost the same terms. There are certainly many points of strong resemblance in your characters; in your intimate acquaintance with each other, and your mutual strong affection, you were counterparts.

Thursday was not so dreadful a day to me as you imagined. There was so much necessary to be done that there was no time for additional misery. Everything was conducted with the greatest tranquillity, and but that I was determined I would see the last, and therefore was upon the listen, I should not have known when they left the house. I watched the little mournful procession the length of the street; and when it turned from my sight, and I had lost her for ever, even then I was not overpowered, nor so much agitated as I am now in writing of it. Never was human being more sincerely mourned by those who attended her remains than was this dear creature. May the sorrow with which she is parted with on earth be a prognostic of the joy with which she is hailed in heaven!

I continue very tolerably well—much better than any one could have supposed possible, because I certainly have had considerable fatigue of body

as well as anguish of mind for months back; but I really am well, and I hope I am properly grateful to the Almighty for having been so supported. Your grandmamma, too, is much better than when I came home.

I did not think your dear papa appeared unwell, and I understand that he seemed much more comfortable after his return from Winchester than he had done before. I need not tell you that he was a great comfort to me; indeed, I can never say enough of the kindness I have received from him and from every other friend.

I get out of doors a good deal and am able to employ myself. Of course those employments suit me best which leave me most at leisure to think of her I have lost, and I do think of her in every variety of circumstance. In our happy hours of confidential intercourse, in the cheerful family party which she so ornamented, in her sick room, on her death-bed, and as (I hope) an inhabitant of heaven. Oh, if I may one day be re-united to her there! I know the time must come when my mind will be less engrossed by her idea, but I do not like to think of it. If I think of her less as on earth, God grant that I may never cease to reflect on her as inhabiting heaven, and never cease my

humble endeavours (when it shall please God) to join her there.

In looking at a few of the precious papers which are now my property I have found some memorandums, amongst which she desires that one of her gold chains may be given to her god-daughter Louisa, and a lock of her hair be set for you. You can need no assurance, my dearest Fanny, that every request of your beloved aunt will be sacred with me. Be so good as to say whether you prefer a brooch or ring. God bless you, my dearest Fanny.

Believe me, most affectionately yours,

CASS. ELIZTH. AUSTEN.

Miss Knight, Godmersham Park,
Canterbury.

Enclosed in one of the Letters of 1807.
Verses to rhyme with 'Rose.'

1. MRS. AUSTEN.

This morning I woke from a quiet repose,
I first rubb'd my eyes, and I next blew my nose ;
With my stockings and shoes I then covered my toes,
And proceeded to put on the rest of my clothes.
This was finished in less than an hour, I suppose.
I employ'd myself next in repairing my hose.

'Twas a work of necessity, not what I chose;
Of my sock I'd much rather have knit twenty rows.
My work being done, I look'd through the win*dows*,
And with pleasure beheld all the bucks and the does,
The cows and the bullocks, the wethers and ewes.
To the library each morning the family goes,
So I went with the rest, though I felt rather froze.
My flesh is much warmer, my blood freer flows,
When I work in the garden with rakes and with hoes.
And now I believe I must come to a close,
For I find I grow stupid e'en while I compose.
If I write any longer my verse will be prose.

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2. Miss Austen (Cassandra).

Love, they say, is like a rose;
I'm sure 'tis like the wind that blows,
For not a human creature knows
How it comes or where it goes.
It is the cause of many woes:
It swells the eyes and reds the nose,
And very often changes those
Who once were friends to bitter foes.
But let us now the scene transpose
And think no more of tears and throes.
Why may we not as well suppose
A smiling face the urchin shows?
And when with joy the bosom glows,
And when the heart has full repose,
'Tis mutual love the gift bestows.

3. Miss Jane Austen.

Happy the lab'rer in his Sunday clothes!
In light-drab coat, smart waistcoat, well-darn'd hose,
And hat upon his head, to church he goes;
As oft, with conscious pride, he downward throws
A glance upon the ample cabbage rose
Which, stuck in button-hole, regales his nose,
He envies not the gayest London beaux.
In church he takes his seat among the rows,
Pays to the place the reverence he owes,
Likes best the prayers whose meaning least he knows,
Lists to the sermon in a softening doze,
And rouses joyous at the welcome close.

---

4. Mrs. Elizabeth Austen.

Never before did I quarrel with a rose,
Till now, that I am told some lines to compose,
Of which I have little idea, God knows;
But since that the task is assigned me by those
To whom love, affection, and gratitude owes
A ready compliance, I *feign* would dispose
And call to befriend me the muse who bestows
The gift of poetry both on friends and foes.
My warmest acknowledgments are due to those
Who watched near my bed and soothed me to repose,
Who pitied my sufferings and shared in my woes,
And, by their *sim*pathy, relieved my sor*rows*.
May I as long as the blood in my veins flows
Feel the warmth of love which now in my breast glows,
And may I sink into a refreshing doze
When I lie my head on my welcome pillows.

In Jane Austen's handwriting, enclosed in the same Letter of 1807.

ON SIR HOME POPHAM'S SENTENCE, APRIL 1807.

Of a Ministry pitiful, angry, mean,
A gallant commander the victim is seen.
For promptitude, vigour, success, does he stand
Condemn'd to receive a severe reprimand!
To his foes I could wish a resemblance in fate:
That they, too, may suffer themselves, soon or late,
The injustice they warrant. But vain is my spite,
They cannot *so* suffer who never do right.

TO MISS BIGG, PREVIOUS TO HER MARRIAGE, WITH SOME POCKETHANDKERCHIEFS I HAD HEMMED FOR HER.

Cambrick! With grateful blessings would I pay
The pleasure given me in sweet employ.
Long may'st thou serve my friend without decay,
And have no tears to wipe but tears of joy.

ON THE SAME OCCASION, BUT NOT SENT.

Cambrick! thou'st been to me a good,
And I would bless thee if I could.
Go, serve thy mistress with delight,
Be small in compass, soft and white;
Enjoy thy fortune, honour'd much
To bear her name and feel her touch;
And that thy worth may last for years,
Slight be her colds, and few her tears.

APPENDICES.

I.

THE notice taken by the Prince Regent of Jane Austen's novels cannot be better described than in the words of Mr. Austen Leigh in the following passage, which I venture to transcribe from his book:—

'It was not till towards the close of her life, when the last of the works that she saw published was in the press, that she received the only mark of distinction ever bestowed upon her; and that was remarkable for the high quarter whence it emanated rather than for any actual increase of fame that it conferred. It happened thus. In the autumn of 1815 she nursed her brother Henry through a dangerous fever and slow convalescence at his house in Hans Place. He was attended by one of the Prince Regent's physicians. All attempts to keep her name secret had at this time ceased, and though it had never appeared on a title-page, all who cared to know might easily learn it: and the friendly physician was aware that his patient's nurse was the author of "Pride and Prejudice." Accordingly he informed her one day that the Prince was a great admirer of her novels; that he read them often, and kept a set in every one of his residences; that he himself therefore had thought it right

to inform his Royal Highness that Miss Austen was staying in London, and that the Prince had desired Mr. Clarke, the librarian of Carlton House, to wait upon her. The next day Mr. Clarke made his appearance, and invited her to Carlton House, saying that he had the Prince's instructions to show her the library and other apartments, and to pay her every possible attention. The invitation was of course accepted, and during the visit to Carlton House Mr. Clarke declared himself commissioned to say that if Miss Austen had any other novel forthcoming she was at liberty to dedicate it to the Prince. Accordingly such a dedication was immediately prefixed to "Emma," which was at that time in the press.

'Mr. Clarke was the brother of Dr. Clarke, the traveller and mineralogist, whose life has been written by Bishop Otter. Jane found in him not only a very courteous gentleman, but also a warm admirer of her talents: though it will be seen by his letters that he did not clearly apprehend the limits of her powers, or the proper field for their exercise. The following correspondence took place between them.

'Feeling some apprehension lest she should make a mistake in acting on the verbal permission which she had received from the Prince, Jane addressed the following letter to Mr. Clarke:—

"Nov. 15, 1815.

"SIR,—I must take the liberty of asking you a question. Among the many flattering attentions which I received from you at Carlton House on Monday last was the information of my being at liberty to dedicate any future work to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, without the necessity of any solicitation on my part. Such, at least, I believed to be your words; but as I am very

anxious to be quite certain of what was intended, I entreat you to have the goodness to inform me how such a permission is to be understood, and whether it is incumbent on me to show my sense of the honour by inscribing the work now in the press to His Royal Highness; I should be equally concerned to appear either presumptuous or ungrateful."

'The following gracious answer was returned by Mr. Clarke, together with a suggestion which must have been received with some surprise:—

"Carlton House: (Nov. 16, 1815).

"DEAR MADAM,—It is certainly not *incumbent* on you to dedicate your work now in the press to His Royal Highness; but if you wish to do the Regent that honour either now or at any future period I am happy to send you that permission, which need not require any more trouble or solicitation on your part.

"Your late works, Madam, and in particular 'Mansfield Park,' reflect the highest honour on your genius and your principles. In every new work your mind seems to increase its energy and power of discrimination. The Regent has read and admired all your publications.

"Accept my best thanks for the pleasure your volumes have given me. In the perusal of them I felt a great inclination to write and say so. And I also, dear Madam, wished to be allowed to ask you to delineate in some future work the habits of life, and character, and enthusiasm of a clergyman, who should pass his time between the metropolis and the country, who should be something like Beattie's Minstrel—

> Silent when glad, affectionate tho' shy,
> And in his looks was most demurely sad;
> And now he laughed aloud, yet none knew why.

Neither Goldsmith, nor La Fontaine in his 'Tableau de Famille,' have in my mind quite delineated an English clergyman, at least of the present day, fond of and entirely engaged in literature, no man's enemy but his own. Pray, dear Madam, think of these things.

"Believe me at all times with sincerity and respect, your faithful and obliged servant,

"J. S. CLARKE, Librarian."

'The following letter, written in reply, will show how unequal the author of "Pride and Prejudice" felt herself to delineating an enthusiastic clergyman of the present day, who should resemble Beattie's Minstrel:—

"Dec. 11.

"DEAR SIR,—My 'Emma' is now so near publication that I feel it right to assure you of my not having forgotten your kind recommendation of an early copy for Carlton House, and that I have Mr. Murray's promise of its being sent to His Royal Highness, under cover to you, three days previous to the work being really out. I must make use of this opportunity to thank you, dear Sir, for the very high praise you bestow on my other novels. I am too vain to wish to convince you that you have praised them beyond their merits. My greatest anxiety at present is that this fourth work should not disgrace what was good in the others. But on this point I will do myself the justice to declare that, whatever may be my wishes for its success, I am strongly haunted with the idea that to those readers who have preferred 'Pride and Prejudice' it will appear inferior in wit, and to those who have preferred 'Mansfield Park' inferior in good sense. Such as it is, however, I hope you will do me the favour of accepting a copy. Mr. Murray will have directions for sending one. I am

quite honoured by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of in your note of Nov. 16th. But I assure you I am *not*. The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must at times be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or at least be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman who, like me, knows only her own mother-tongue, and has read little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress.

"Believe me, dear Sir,

"Your obliged and faithful humbl sert.

"JANE AUSTEN."[1]

'Mr. Clarke, however, was not to be discouraged from proposing another subject. He had recently been appointed chaplain and private English secretary to Prince Leopold, who was then about to be united to the Princess Charlotte; and when he again wrote to express the gracious thanks of the Prince Regent for the copy of "Emma" which had been presented, he suggests that "an historical romance illustrative of the august House of Cobourg would just now be very interesting," and might very properly be

[1] It was her pleasure to boast of greater ignorance than she had any just claim to. She knew more than her mother-tongue, for she knew a good deal of French and a little of Italian.

dedicated to Prince Leopold. This was much as if Sir William Ross had been set to paint a great battle-piece; and it is amusing to see with what grave civility she declined a proposal which must have struck her as ludicrous, in the following letter:—

"My dear Sir,—I am honoured by the Prince's thanks and very much obliged to yourself for the kind manner in which you mention the work. I have also to acknowledge a former letter forwarded to me from Hans Place. I assure you I felt very grateful for the friendly tenor of it, and hope my silence will have been considered, as it was truly meant, to proceed only from an unwillingness to tax your time with idle thanks. Under every interesting circumstance which your own talents and literary labours have placed you in, or the favour of the Regent bestowed, you have my best wishes. Your recent appointments I hope are a step to something still better. In my opinion, the service of a court can hardly be too well paid, for immense must be the sacrifice of time and feeling required by it.

'You are very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Saxe-Cobourg, might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own

way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Your very much obliged, and sincere friend,

"J. AUSTEN."

"Chawton, near Alton, April 1, 1816."

'I append, also, Lady Morley's letter to which Jane refers in one of her own, and also her reply:—

"Saltram: (December 27, 1815).

"MADAM,—I have been most anxiously waiting for an introduction to 'Emma,' and am infinitely obliged to you for your kind recollection of me, which will procure me the pleasure of her acquaintance some days sooner than I should otherwise have had it. I am already become intimate with the Woodhouse family, and feel that they will not amuse and interest me less than the Bennetts, Bertrams, Norrises, and all their admirable predecessors. I can give them no higher praise.

"I am, Madam, your much obliged

"F. MORLEY."

Miss J. Austen to the Countess of Morley.

"MADAM,—Accept my thanks for the honour of your note, and for your kind disposition in favour of 'Emma.' In my present state of doubt as to her reception in the world, it is particularly gratifying to me to receive so early an assurance of your Ladyship's approbation. It encourages me to depend on the same share of general good opinion which 'Emma's' predecessors have experienced, and to believe that I have not yet, as almost every writer of fancy does sooner or later, overwritten myself.

"I am, Madam,

"Your obliged and faithful servt.

"J. AUSTEN."

"December 31, 1815."

II.

COPIED FROM AN OLD ACCOUNT-BOOK IN THE HAND-

'The Account of the Expences for Cloaths, Linen, &c. for my 3 Bed Linen given to Mrs. Cage and

RECD.

	£	s.	d.
1791.			
July 27. Recd of Sir Brook for several Bills	29	13	6
Dec. 25. Recd of the Extrs ¼ interest on the Fortunes of Fanny, Sophia, and Elizabeth	52	10	0
1792.			
June 2. Recd of the Extrs for wedding cloaths and other expences	400	0	0
June 19. Advanced by me on the above account by desire of Lady Waltham	300	0	0
Recd of Mrs. Fielding at different times	36	0	0
August 16. Advanced by me to make up deficiencies, and to clear the whole account	49	12	6
	£867	16	0

£867 16 0

WRITING OF LADY BRIDGES (FANNY FOWLER).

Daughters Weddings in Decr 1791, *and subsequent Acct of Child purchased for Mrs. Austen*, 1792.

PER CONTRA.

		£	s.	d.
1791.				
July 16.	Shaw, Linen Draper, Bath	7	7	0
22.	Pd. Faulding, do. Coventry St.	3	12	6
23.	do. do. do. do.	1	14	0
25.	do. Comerford do. Bond St.	12	0	0
27.	do. Winter for black Taffeta	5	0	0
Sept. 19.	Pd. Percival for a black chintz	1	11	6
24.	„ Faulding	7	10	0
Oct. 31.	Mrs. Lilly for plain work	2	12	6
	Mrs. Mercer do.	2	14	0
	Smallwood for threads, &c.	0	8	6
	Emery for Body Lining	1	13	4
Dec. 14 and 27.	Presents to Jeffrey and the servants	19	19	0
	Gave to each of the dear girls for Pocket money £21	63	0	0
1792.				
April 24.	Pd. Ratcliffe for plain work	8	2	11
	Briggs for *Minionet*	6	6	0
	Calloway's bill for ribbons	1	18	2
April 30.	Lilly for plain work	7	13	6
„	Hookham for Bills, &c.	4	17	6
June 19.	Pd. Warriner as per bill	199	12	11
	„ Jacquin do	13	1	0
	„ M. Lachrie do.	15	5	0
	„ Cooper do.	20	16	6
	„ Hatsell do.	14	8	0
	„ Fletcher do.	16	4	0
	„ Schneider do.	20	14	6
20.	„ Nours & Co.	65	17	0
	ditto	83	2	0
	„ Falconer	14	2	0
	„ Webb	31	8	0
	„ Ludlam	13	11	0
	„ Cierlars & Co.	24	3	4
	„ Coup	5	9	0
	„ Toussaint	7	7	0
	„ Winter for edgings, &c.	18	18	0
	„ Weindley for fans	2	7	6
	„ Seniors as per bill	1	18	0
	„ Jones do.	5	3	6
	„ Collins do.	6	4	0
Aug. 15.	Pd. Percival & Condell	130	3	4
	Total	£867	16	0

Inventory of Linen and Clothes made up for Fanny, when she married and went to Combe, Dec. 14th, 1791. N.B. Sophia and Elizabeth had the same Dec. 27.

24 Day shifts.
14 night do.
36 Pocket Hfs.
24 Napkins.
3 Powdering Gowns.
8 p^{r} of Pockets.
12 p^{r} of Drawers.
4 Bedgowns.
12 night caps.
12 under caps.
14 p^{r} silk stockings.
14 p^{r} cotton do.
6 p^{r} gauze worsted.
6 Flannel Petticoats.
8 under Dimity do.
4 *Callico* upper do.
2 Corded Dimity do.
2 India Dimity do.
7 Muslin Petticoats.
1 white *Sattin* do.
3 Dimity Muslin Pierrots.
2 Plain muslin do.
3 Round gowns flounced.
1 ditto scollop'd.
1 Black chintz night gown.
1 Black silk ditto and petticoat.
2 Color'd chintz gowns.
3 muslin cloaks.
1 Lawn do.
1 Black silk do.
1 White satin do.
3 Habits.
2 striped and 2 plain white waistcoats.
15 pr of shoes.
3 riding-Hats.
2 Bonnets.
3 caps.
1 Muff and Tippet, sable.
2 great coats.
4 dozen of gloves.
2 pr of stays.

Muslin, &c., &c.

4 chemise Handkerchiefs.
6 worked ditto
24 striped Border'd do.
6 plain muslin do.
12 worked cravats.
4 plain do.
12 pr white laced ruffles.
6 pr black ditto
6 pr plain muslin do.
8 plain Tuckers.
4 worked do.
1 worked Lawn Pierrot.
1 Japan flowered Mus^{n} do.
1 fine worked Mus^{n} do.

Immediately after the preceding inventory there appears in the same book three separate accounts, headed 'Child-bed Linen given to Mrs. Cage, May 23, 1792,' 'Child Bed Linen given by Mrs. Deedes to Sophia,' with sundry articles 'Bought in addition,' and 'Child-bed

Linen Bought for Mrs. Austen, Sept. 14th, 1792,' together with a separate list headed 'Things for the Child.' As these lists are pretty much the same, and would probably not be interesting to the general public, I should not have alluded to them but for the fact that a fourth list informs those who care to compare present with past prices, with the cost of many articles a hundred years ago, and this information may, perhaps, interest those upon whom a similar expense has already fallen, or may possibly fall in the future. This list is headed:—

The Quality and Price of each of the Articles preceding, bought for Mrs. Austen.

	£	s.	d.
30 yrds of Diaper for 2 shirts at 22d	2	15	0
„ do for 4 single at do	2	15	0
4 yrds $\frac{5}{8}$ Irish—for 4 Dble Binders 2 yrds do for 2 single at 2/8	0	16	0
18 yrds fine Irish $\frac{7}{8}$ for 6 short shifts at 3/6	3	3	0
18 yrds India Dimity for 6 waistcoats 3/6	3	3	0
13 yrds Callico for lining 2 shirts at 15d		16	3
8 yrds $\frac{3}{4}$ Dimity for a wrapping-gown 3/3	1	8	$5\frac{1}{4}$
3 yrds fine checked muslin for Limming /5	0	15	0
2 yrds $\frac{1}{2}$ long cloth for a Mantle 5/6	0	13	9
3 yrds coarse flannel 16d/	0	4	0
3 yrds fine do 2s/	0	6	0
5 yrds Green Persian Cover for the Horse 22d/	0	9	2
$7\frac{3}{4}$ yards fine India Dimity for 2 cloaks	1	12	$1\frac{1}{2}$
$5\frac{1}{2}$ yrds Callico to line Ellwide do 2/2	0	11	11
2 yrds corded Dimity for 2 linings for the Basket at 3s	0	6	0
10 yrds $\frac{3}{4}$ do for 6 child's Bed gowns 3/3	0	15	0
12 yrds check'd muslin for 6 robes 3s/	1	16	0
2 Pr of clouting at 25s	2	10	0
1 do 28	1	8	0
1 do 36	1	16	0
1 do 25	1	5	0
10 yrds fine Diaper 3/6	3	3	0
Carried forward	32	7	$7\frac{3}{4}$

The Quality and Price of each of the Articles preceding, bought for Mrs. Austen—cont.

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	32	7	7¾
10 yrds fine Diaper 21ᵈ	1	11	6
1 pr Damask 35ˢ	1	15	0
¾ of a yd wide Irish for under stays . . .	0	3	0
Buckles, Tape, Leather Bones for do	0	5	0
A Basket for the child's things	0	3	6
1 doz Damask clouts 38/	1	18	0
1 do 34/	1	14	0
1 cotton swaith		1	0
4 Best Blankets 3/9		15	0
Total	£40	13	7¾

I do not think it necessary to give in detail the 'things for the child,' especially as no prices are mentioned, but in order that my great-grandmother may not be suspected of having robbed an infant of its due, I would respectfully mention that six shirts, six robes, six bedgowns of 'corded dimity,' &c. &c., were supplemented by '3 cockades of Lace,' 'a suit of Xtning Linen consisting of a muslin Robe, fine cambrick cap and shirt,' and sundry other articles of quality and quantity sufficient to make any nurse proud, and to secure the comfort and happiness of any reasonable infant.

Letters from Fanny Fowler, Lady Bridges, announcing the engagement of her three daughters, Elizabeth, Fanny, and Sophia.

Goodnestone: (March 2, 1791).

My dear Mrs. Fielding,

I cannot leave to my Daū[rs] the pleasure of informing you of an Event that gives us the greatest satisfaction. We had for some time observed a great attachment between Mr. Austin (Mr. Knight's Relation) and our dear Eliz[th]; and Mr. Knight has, in the handsomest manner, declared his entire approbation of it; but as they are both very young, he wish'd it not to take place immediately, and as it will not suit him to give up much at present, their Income will be small, and they must be contented to live in the Country, which I think will be no hardship to either party, as they have no high Ideas, and it is a greater satisfaction to us than if she was to be thrown upon the world in a higher sphere, young and inexperienced as she is. He is a very sensible, amiable young man, and I trust and hope there is every prospect of Happiness to all parties in their union. This Affair has very much agitated Sir B., and he has not been quite so well for some days past as he had been for a month before; but now it is decided he will, I make no doubt, be better again in a few days, but I have long observed that when his mind has been agitated he has had a return of cough and oppression. He has sent his case to Bath, and if he is encouraged to go there, we shall set out according to the time pointed out from thence, as

he has desired to know when the Waters have most efficacy.[1] Fatty is so good (as) to stay with my Girls during our absence, or I should be much distress'd at leaving them so long. She has been pretty well, upon the whole, ever since she has been here, and in remarkable good Looks and Spirits.

Adieu, my dearest Mrs. Fielding. All here unite with me in kindest love and compts: as due. My Daūrs desire their duty to you. Believe me ever yours affectionately, F. B.

To Mrs. Fielding, St. James's Palace, London.

Goodnestone: (March 28, 1791).

My dear Mrs. Fielding,

I flatter myself you are so truly interested in the welfare of my dearest children, that I am not afraid of being troublesome in writing again so soon, but must inform you that my dearest Fanny has received an offer of Marriage from Mr. Lewis Cage, a Gentleman of this County of an unexceptionable good character. His proposal has our entire approbation. As you was so kind to express a wish to be acquainted with Mr. Austin, I inform'd him of it, in consequence of which he call'd at St. James's, and was very much disappointed he was not

[1] Sir Brook died before his daughters were married. 'Fatty' was Isabella, sister of Mrs. C. Fielding's husband, and daughter of 'Anne Palmer,' by her second husband Col. Fielding. She seems to have been a popular person, known all her life as 'Fatty Fielding,' and often at Goodnestone and Godmersham. She was godmother to one of Mr. E. Knight's children (Marianne), and died unmarried in 1812.

so fortunate to find you at home, as his Time would not permit him to make a Second Attempt; indeed, I should be quite happy that your two future Nephews should be known to you, and I hope it will not be long before they have an opportunity of being introduced. My Daughters are going to-morrow to Godmersham for a Week; I do not accompany them, as Mr. Bridges is here. Sir Brook continues charmingly well, and is in very good spirits. I hope we shall get a glimpse of you as we pass through town to Bath the middle of next month, tho' our stay will be very short. How is Miss Finch?[1] I hope much recovered since she left Margate. I am quite delighted to hear such good accounts of Augusta,[2] and hope she feels no remains of her severe Illness, but that she and all the rest of your Family are well. All here unite with me in kindest Love to you all.

Believe me, ever yours affectionately, F. B.

Brock St., Bath: (July 10, 1791).

My dear Mrs. Fielding,

After having wrote to you so lately you will be no doubt surprized at hearing again so soon, and not less so to find that the Cause of my addressing myself to you is to inform you that we have received proposals of Marriage from Mr. William Deedes for your God-daughter, our dear Sophia. He is a young Man of a very Amiable Disposition and universally beloved, and his Father has been so kind

[1] 'Miss Finch' must mean one of Mrs. C. Fielding's three sisters, who all died unmarried.

[2] 'Augusta Sophia' was the youngest daughter of Mrs. C. Fielding; she married Mr. Geo. Hicks in 1813, and lived to a good old age.

to approve his Choice. I hope it will meet with your approbation, and think she bids as fair to be happy with her Connection as her sisters with theirs. It is certainly a very singular instance of good fortune in One Family, that 3 Girls, almost unknown, should have attach'd to themselves three Young Men of such unexceptionable Characters, and I pray to God that their future conduct will ever do Credit to their Choice. Mr. William Deedes is gone with Mr. Knight on the Scotch Tour; he had been long engaged to accompany them, but did not choose to set out on so long an excursion till he had explain'd himself. As I have many letters to write I will not *obtain* you longer than to beg our best Love and good wishes to you and all your dear Family, and kind Compliments to Lady Charlotte and Miss Finch.

Believe me, ever affectionately yours, F. B.

III.

Mrs. Knight to Mr. Knatchbull.

Saturday.

Indeed, my dear Edward, I am very glad your wife gave you a scold: as I did not know that another sore finger prevented her holding a Pen, I was quite surprised at not hearing from her—her constant attention has spoiled me and made me unreasonable. Yesterday, however, a kind present from *Col.* Knatchbull satisfied me

that *you* were alive, whatever might have happened to your wife and children. It was very good of you to think of me; I am very fond of smelts, and enjoyed them exceedingly, but you should not have sent half the number, for I was obliged to let a neighbour help me to consume them. I was soon awakened from the dream of happiness in which Lady Honywood found me, for the next day, which was not cold, I was almost as ill as at any time, and I have since that had many painful Days, and am quite desponding again. People talk of the fine weather—the hot sun I do not feel, but the cold N.E. wind penetrates to my fireside, and I am always starved.

I am glad I shall get a peep at dear Belle on the 15th. I hope you will both contrive to dine *here* with Charlie and his wife. The first day of their arrival I always provide for them. I do not much like the accounts they send me of my nephew Wyndham; he seems a most indolent young man, and I heartily wish he had gone into a Regiment of the Line. The sight of the Installations he pronounced a bore, and rejected a ticket. His father then kindly sent a chaise for Wadham, but Dr. Butler had refused permission to some other boys to go, and therefore could not grant it to him. I wonder whether you have seen your new neighbours yet. What an elegant way they fixed on to pass part of their wedding Day! An Ostler and Housemaid at an Inn, who had a *chay* lent them by their master for the Day, would probably have spent it in the same manner. Indeed, my dear Edward, I hope *Lord Burleigh* will not make his appearance in my Room at the same time with his son again; I have hardly

recovered it yet. As the christening is to be on Tuesday, I suppose the whole Party will soon adjourn to Hatch ; by that time, perhaps, he will be obliged to begin his canvass, and some puzzling questions he will have to answer in the course of it.

Miss Toke is much the same. Their sea Plan is now fixed, and a good House in Nelson's Crescent is engaged for them, from the 1st of July for 2 months, at 80 guineas. The expense seems to be a *dreadful* burthen upon *all* their minds; but as it will only cause Mr. T.'s putting a 100*l.* instead of a 1,000*l.* in the stocks, I cannot pity them. You will be glad to resign the correspondence to your wife, if you are to be plagued with such long letters. I expect you will put this into her hand before you have got half through it.

Adieu, dear Edward. My best love to Belle, and believe me, affectionately yours, C. K.[1]

[1] This letter must have been written in 1808 or 1809. 'Dear Belle' was Mrs. Knatchbull, my father's first wife, Annabella-Christiana Honywood, who married in 1806, and died in 1814. 'My nephew Wyndham' must mean a son of her brother Wyndham, who died during his father's lifetime, although I cannot find his name in any family pedigree. 'Lord Burleigh' was her nickname for her cousin, my grandfather, Sir Edward Knatchbull. My father, by the kindness of Sir Joseph and Lady Banks (his aunt), had been placed in a position not so dependent upon his father as would otherwise have been the case, and was eventually very greatly benefited from the same sources. My grandfather, having married three times, and having many younger children, some differences upon pecuniary matters occurred between him and his son, during which they seem to have accidentally met at 'Whitefriars,' to which Mrs. Knight here alludes. I do not know what were 'the puzzling questions' which my grandfather would have to answer; the fact of his third wife being a Roman Catholic had given great offence to the hot

Protestants of Kent; but they had had their revenge in 1802, when he was defeated at the general election, and the reference to my father's first wife shows that this letter was written several years later.

Talking of elections, the three famous contests of 1796, 1802, and 1806 furnished the text for some verses which I may as well insert here, although they have no more to do with Jane Austen than with the man in the moon, but may amuse those who take an interest in matters of the sort. The facts are briefly these—Knatchbull and Honywood—Tory and Whig—were the great contending powers, whilst Geary was the moderate politician of neutral tint, who was happy to receive support from both, and had, moreover, as a popular and good man of business, a number of personal friends. In 1796, Knatchbull, by throwing his second votes to Geary, brought him in at Honywood's expense. In 1802, when he tried to do the same thing, various causes had contributed to strengthen Honywood, who was able to turn the tables and throw Knatchbull out by splitting his votes with Geary. In 1806 both had grown wary, each polled all the 'plumpers' he could, and Geary, getting scarcely any second votes from the other two, had to retire discomfited. Hence the following verses in 1806:—

Some ten years ago, three men of great fame,
Filmer Honywood, Knatchbull, and Geary by name,
To the County of Kent did their service propose
As Parliament men, with a view to be chose.
The Freeholders then did most wisely decree
That Knatchbull and Geary were the best of the three.
Six years had elapsed when the very same men
To the County did offer their service again;
The Freeholders then did as wisely decide
To take t'other two and set Knatchbull aside;
Four years after this came another election,
When Geary in turn underwent his rejection.
Let no one from hence most rashly insist on't
That the County of Kent is not truly consistent—
Most consistent to all she appears, without doubt,
By putting *all* 'in' and by turning *all* 'out'!

IV.

Mrs. Knight to Miss Knight, afterwards Lady Knatchbull.

Oct. 26, 1809.

I was quite delighted with your letter, my dearest Fanny, but you have got yourself into a scrape by your kind attention to my wishes, for you sent me just such an account as I like to receive, and I shall therefore be the more desirous of hearing from you again. I have also heard from your uncle Henry, so that I believe I am almost as much acquainted with all your proceedings as if I had been one of your Party. As I now do nothing, or go anywhere, it will not be in my Power to reward you for your trouble by an amusing letter in return, but as you are a reasonable, good girl, I know you will be satisfied with what I can tell you. *Our* Jubilee went off with great *éclat*; above 600*l.* were subscribed, and about as many persons were regaled with meat, Bread and Beer, and every private House, I believe, presented a scene of festivity and happiness. Mary Fox and Daniel *assisted* at a Bowl of Punch, &c. &c., at the Friars, and I was glad to hear from them a good account of the little ones at Godmersham. Mr. Honywood sent a Jubilee donation of 100*l.* to the Hospital, with a very handsome letter to Mr. Toke. Of the grand Ball I hope to give you an account which my Friends promised to bring me this morning. I hear the gowns &c. for the Goodnestone Party were got ready, but to be sure it was a little in the usual dilatory style of the Bridges's to put off all preparations till the preceding

Monday. Pray tell me whether you ever saw your intended Aunt. It is a pity she cannot change her Christian, with her other name, for *Dolly*, *my dear*, will not sound well. I know something of her and have heard more, and as Sir Brook makes a second match I think the Family are very lucky in the Person he has fixed upon. I had a letter from dear Harriet, but she did not then know what was going forward. I am sorry to hear from herself, as well as others, that she is *very* thin, without any cause for it. She tells me she has had her hair cut off, and there are various opinions as to the effect. Her Husband, however, thinks it an improvement, and that is sufficient for a good wife. I heard of the Chawton Party looking very comfortable at Breakfast, from a gentleman who was travelling by their door in a Post-chaise about ten days ago. Your account of the whole family gives me the sincerest Pleasure, and I beg you will assure them all how much I feel interested in their happiness. I think, my dearest Fanny, that your poor little watch always seemed in an uncomfortable state. If you like to have a new one, I shall have great pleasure in providing you with one, and as I suppose you will be in Sloane Street a day or two in your return, it would be a good opportunity to make your choice. A watch and chain will certainly not cost less than 20 guineas, and you may be assured I shall not grudge 5 or 10 more to please my dear God-daughter. Draw upon your Uncle Henry, therefore, for what you require. By a letter from Miss Cuthbert, I find I am in your Papa's debt.

The Ball was full, but the harmony of the evening was

destroyed by the folly of Lady C. Nelson, who made a *select* Supper Party, and disobliged all the rest. When she and her Party returned to the Ball-room, the *other* set would not join her dance, the music was stopped, and in short there was a grand Row. The Dinner had passed off better. No Toast was drank with more enthusiasm than Mr. Milles, who represented Canterbury at the time of the King's accession. He bow'd and bow'd again, and was cheer'd and cheer'd again. Mrs. Palmer was at the Ball.

Adieu, my dear. Affectionately yours, C. K.[1]

[1] The 'intended aunt'—'Dolly, my dear'—was Dorothy Hawley, Sir Brook's second wife.

THE END.

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